THE UNMISSABLE END-OF-YEAR ISSUE

★CLASSIC★ ROCK

THE BEST OF 2022

THE YEAR'S GREATEST ALBUMS AND SONGS & THE PEOPLE WHO ROCKED OUR WORLD

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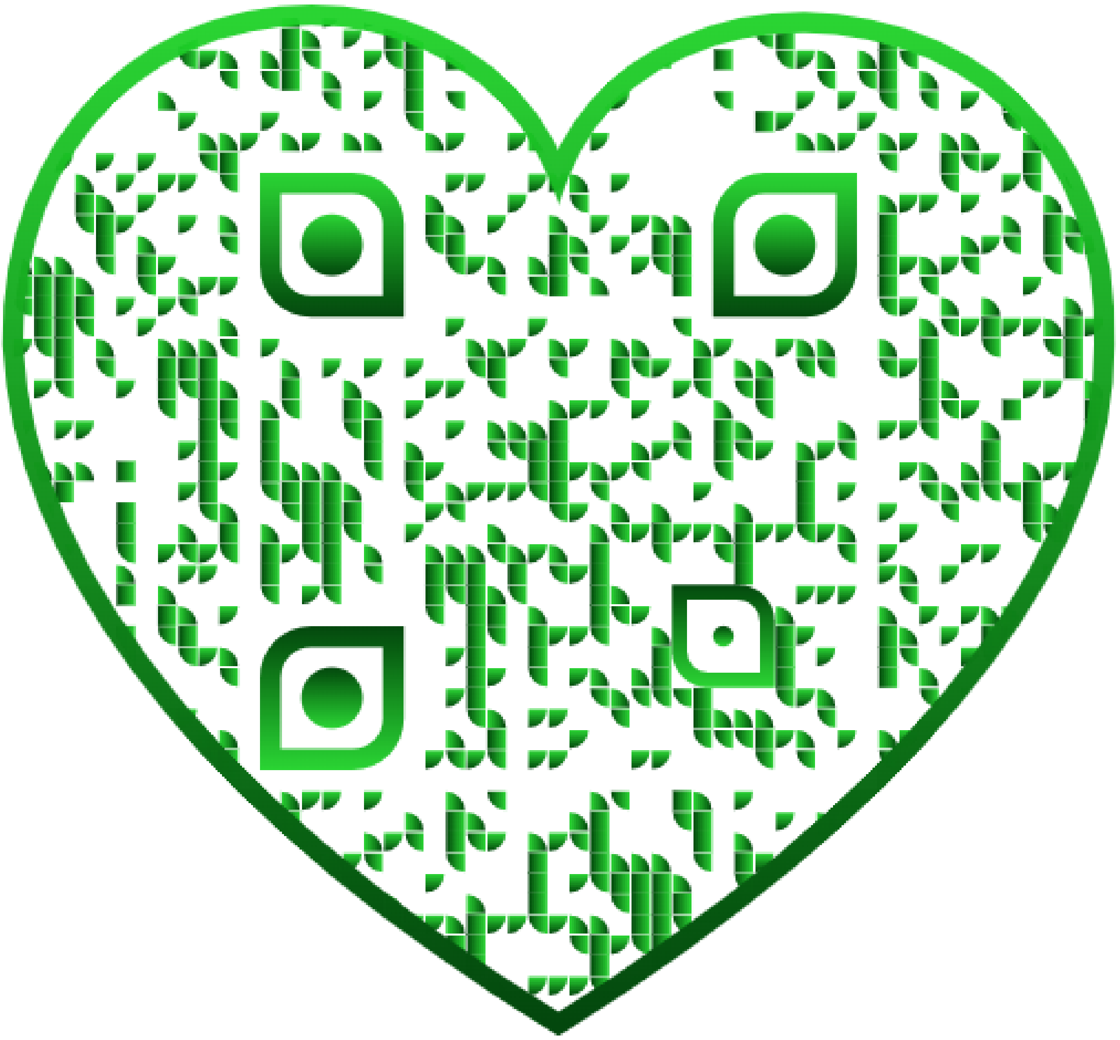
FUTURE
ISSUE 308



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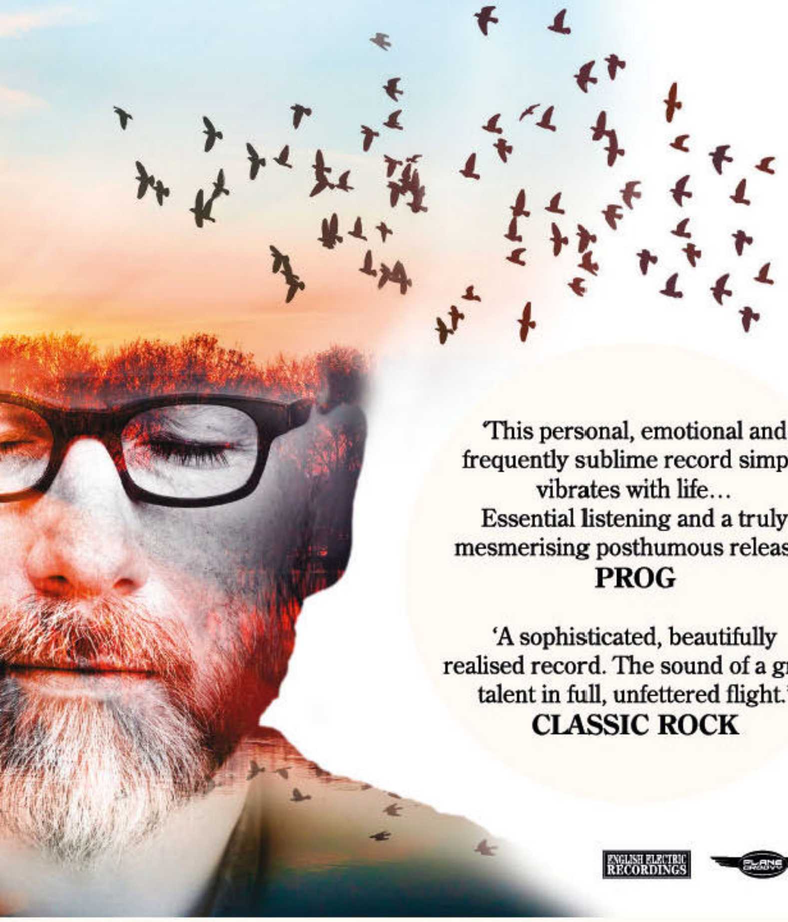

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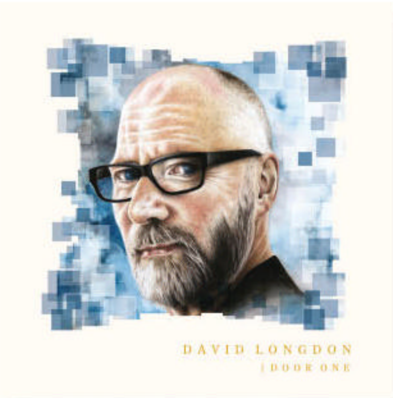

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Welcome to our last issue of 2022. I don't know about anyone else, but I have no clue where the last 12 months have gone! I recall saying in this space last year that I hoped by now we'd be back to some sort of normality after two years of covid precautions. And, thankfully, we are. Bands are back out on the road – we're back in the concert halls and festival fields watching 'em – and we've also been able to enjoy the recorded fruits of their labour, as many albums had their genesis over the lockdowns. Despite the strangeness of that whole thing, it inspired some fantastic new music, as you can tell from our round-up of *Classic Rock*'s best albums of the year.

As is tradition, this issue we look back at the year – the highs, the lows and all things in between, and talk to some of the artists who made it happen. So sit back, relax and join us in celebrating the Year In Rock 2022. And from all of us at *Classic Rock*, we hope you have an excellent Christmas break and a very happy and healthy 2023.

Siân Llewellyn, Editor

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This month's contributors

STEVE MITCHELL
Designer and illustrator Steve Mitchell is responsible for the shiny typography on this month's cover. For many years he's been a regular contributor to *Classic Rock* and its sister titles. He generally works in graphic design for the live music industry. Check out his latest screen prints and street art adventures at the Instagram @fiftysevendesign

POLLY GLASS
Classic Rock's Deputy Editor Polly has had her work cut out this issue. She's been wrangling lists and logistics, yelling at contributors to send in their Albums Of The Year nominations, and much more. Oh, and that's without all the writing and interviewing of rock stars she's somehow managed to fit in for our big review of 2022! If you see her out, buy her a pint!

WILL IRELAND
Photographer Will Ireland has been photographing musicians for magazines and other outlets for more than 15 years, and has shot the likes of Slash, AC/DC, Status Quo and Stereophonics for *Classic Rock*. This month he shot Monster Truck and Those Damn Crows for our feature on page 62. Check out his Instagram @will_ireland_photo to see more of his work.

Classic Rock

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INSIDE THE WORLD OF ROCK

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the DIRT

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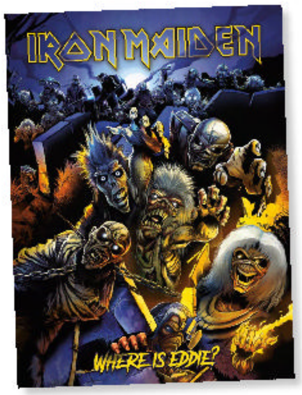
WHERE IS EDDIE?

Iron Maiden's new venture looks like fiendishly good fun. Can you spot their iconic mascot?

Love Iron Maiden? Love puzzles? Ever wondered how – indeed if – you could somehow combine these two passions? Well, a forthcoming book *Where Is Eddie?* might just be the answer. Essentially it's a *Where's Wally*-style book, where you search detailed illustrations for Maiden's ever-changing mascot. Published by Fantoons, the people who brought the world *Motorhead: The Rise Of The Loudest Band In The World*, and *Iron Maiden: The Official Coloring Book*, the 36-page *Where Is Eddie?* arrives on May 23 next year, and is available to pre-order now.

Throughout their illustrious career, which began in East London way back in 1975, the music from the band named after a rather gruesome torture device first used in the 19th century has captured the hearts of fans around the world. The band's line-up might have changed many times in their 40-plus years, with bassist Steve Harris the only remaining original full-time member, but there's another name that has been there for pretty much their whole career too, and is just as recognisable – if not more so – than any of the band members past or present. Eddie has appeared in a number of guises on album sleeves and can be seen on stage at every Maiden live shows. He's on T-shirts and other merchandise (including colouring books), in a videogame and on a Maiden-themed pinball machine.



In the *Where Is Eddie?* book, you search for Eddie in double-page puzzle illustrations inspired by Maiden's songs and albums. Walk the edgy East End streets of *Killers*; escape the maddening asylum of *Piece of Mind*; trek across the desert ruins of *Powerslave*, then plummet head-first down into *The Number Of The Beast*'s hellfire… In all of the illustrations, Eddie is hiding there somewhere. Have fun finding him.

Where Is Eddie? can be pre-ordered now at Amazon, price £18. **PB**

This month The Dirt was compiled by Paul Brannigan, Ian Fortnam, Dannii Leivers, Fraser Lewry, Dave Ling, Scot Rowley, Will Simpson, Henry Yates

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RIP

Thank you and good night.

DH Peligro
July 9, 1959 – October 28, 2022

The former drummer with the Dead Kennedys and Red Hot Chili Peppers has passed away at the age of 63 following a fall at his Los Angeles home. Peligro joined the Dead Kennedys in 1981, and replaced drummer Jack Irons in the Chilis seven years later. RHCP bassist Flea wrote on Instagram: "The first time I saw you play with the DKs you blew my mind: the power, the soul, the recklessness. You became my beloved friend."

Gregg Philbin
Death announced October 24, 2022

REO Speedwagon frontman Kevin Cronin has mourned the Illinois-based band's former bassist. Gregg Philbin, reportedly 75 years old, played on REO's first six albums and also the 1977 concert double album *You Get What You Play For*. "No one should underestimate the Philbin Factor in the evolution of REO Speedwagon," Cronin wrote. "Gregg approached the bass guitar much like John Entwistle [The Who]. They both played it as more of a lead instrument."

Mimi Parker
September 15, 1967 – November 5, 2022

The drummer, vocalist and songwriter with Minnesota minimalist alt.rock band Low has died following a battle with ovarian cancer. Parker, 55, was married to the group's guitarist and co-vocalist Alan Sparhawk. Across a 29-year career, Low released 13 full-length studio albums. "This is crushing news," said Tool's Maynard James Keenan. "Although I've never met them, Mimi and Alan have been a huge influence on my writing approach with regards to pace, space, and harmony."

Robert Gordon
March 29, 1947 – October 18, 2022

Maryland-born Robert Gordon helped to spearhead the rockabilly revival during the 70s, and was also associated with the NYC punk scene. His most recent album, *Rockabilly For Life*, was released in 2020. No cause of death has been disclosed, but the 75-year-old had been diagnosed with myeloid leukaemia.

Jim Sohns
Died July 29, 2022

The singer with Chicago-based garage-rock group the Shadows Of Knight has died after suffering a stroke. He was 75 years old. The band's biggest hit was a 1975 cover of Van Morrison's *Gloria*. ▷

Keith Levene

July 18, 1957 – November 11, 2022

The guitarist who was a founding member of both The Clash and Public Image Ltd has died from complications of liver cancer at the age of 65. The news was broken by the author Adam Hammond. In a statement, Hammond described Keith Levene as "among the most innovative, audacious and influential guitarists of all time. He sought to create a new paradigm in music and with willing collaborators John Lydon and Jah Wobble, succeeded in doing just that. His guitar work over the nine minutes of *Theme*, the first track on the first PiL album, defined what alternative music should be.

"As well as helping to make PiL the most important band of the age, Keith also founded The Clash with Mick Jones and had a major influence on their early sound," Hammond continued. "So much of what we listen to today owes much to Keith's work, some of it acknowledged, most of it not. The world is a darker place without his genius. Mine will be darker without my mate."

Levene was born in North London in 1957. As a youth he became obsessed with Yes guitarist Steve Howe. At the age of 15 he eventually worked for the band, as a member of the road crew for the *Close To The Edge* tour.

In 1976 Levene hooked up with Mick Jones to form The Clash, but was a member for just eight months and never recorded with them. He did, however, play a significant role in the group's history, after approaching Joe Strummer at a 101'ers gig and convincing him to join the band.

"[We] talked Joe into coming over to my squat in Shepherd's Bush," Levene told *Perfect Sound Forever* in 2001. "I was playing guitar with him and playing some 101'ers tunes. He went: 'Hey man, I just love you and I love the way you play guitar.' So I said: 'Will you do it?' And we got him in The Clash."

In '78 Levene joined former Sex Pistol John Lydon, bassist Jah Wobble and drummer Jim Walker in the founding line-up of Public Image Limited. He played on their first three albums – *Public Image: First Issue* in 1978, *Metal Box* the following year, and *The Flowers of Romance* in 1981 – and during the recording of their fourth album, 1984's *This Is What You Want… This Is What You Get*.

Post-PiL, Levene's career became more low key, but his angular, razor-edged playing continued to influence a generation of post-punk musicians, from Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist John Frusciante, who said Levene "explored the possibilities of what you can do with the guitar", to Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie, who said he "reinvented rock guitar playing".

Levene told the *What Bitcoin Did* podcast in 2020: "Did I want to be Page or Hendrix or any of those kind of things? No way. Not because it was hard, because I could play like that. I chose not to do that as a letter of intent. We don't copy."

Levene also worked on the demos for the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *The Uplift Mofo Party Plan* – the album the band made immediately prior to Frusciante joining – and collaborated with rappers Ice T and Tone Loc. He was part of industrial music supergroup Pigface, and also released five solo albums.

Mike Scott of The Waterboys also paid homage to Levene, tweeting: "Travel on well, Keith Levene. You innovated, you chimed, you Clashed, you soundtracked Johnny Rotten's last great moments and you once trounced me at *Space Invaders*." **FL**

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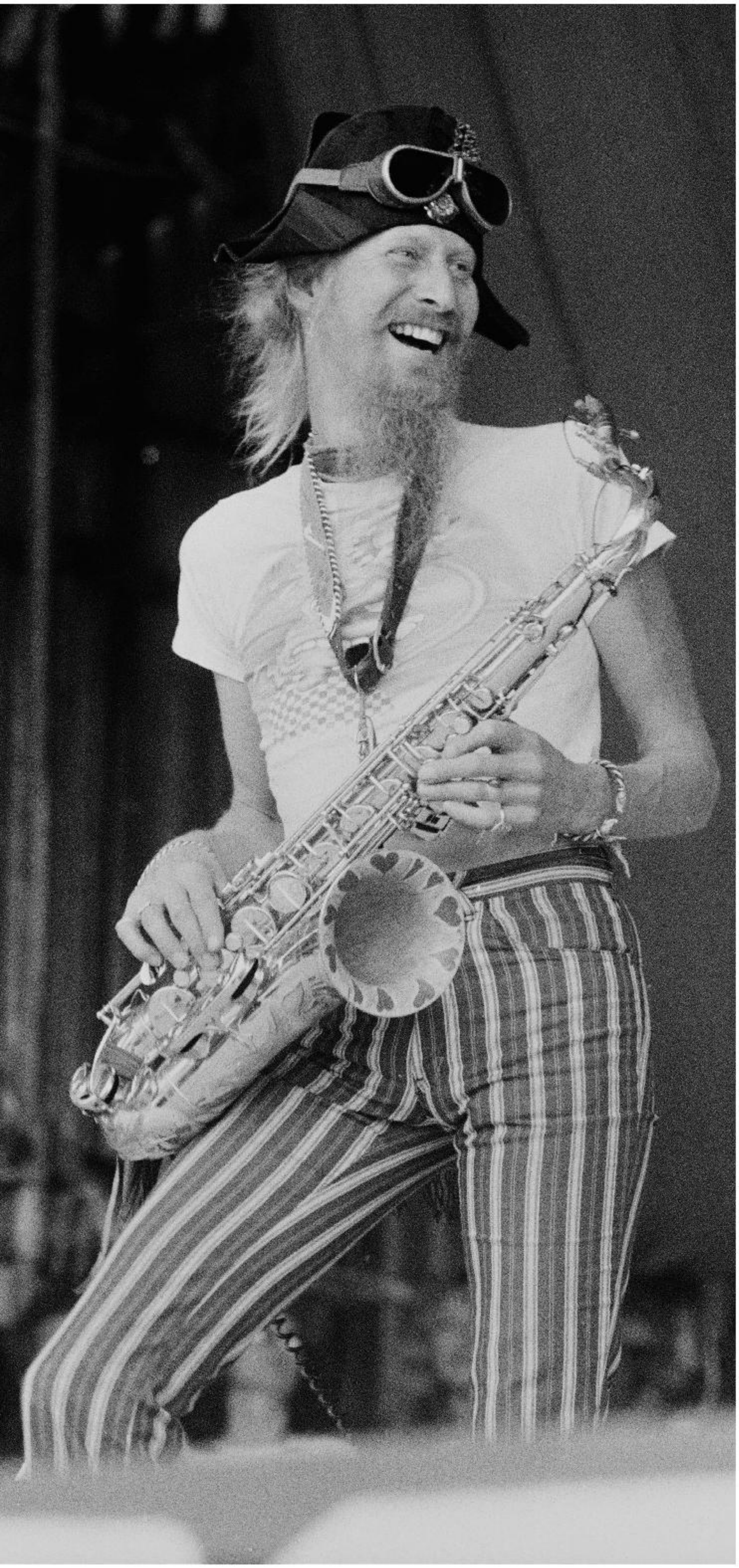

Nik Turner

August 26, 1940 – November 10, 2022

Hawkwind co-founder Nik Turner has "moved onto the next phase of his Cosmic Journey," was how his passing was announced on his personal Facebook page. The 82-year-old vocalist, saxophonist, flautist and songwriter "passed away peacefully at home".

Born into a theatrical family, Turner was raised in Margate. He entered employment by several routes: circus roustabout, an engineering course, and a spell in the merchant navy.

"I grew up on jazz," Turner told *Classic Rock* in 2015. "My mother played piano, my uncle played clarinet, my brother played trumpet." In 1999 he told *Mojo*: "What I wanted to do was play free jazz in a rock band. [That's] what I was trying to do in Hawkwind, basically."

Despite initially doubting his own talent when joining Hawkwind in 1969, Turner became an important part of their early success, writing and co-writing some of their most enduring songs, including *Master Of The Universe*, released on 1971's *In Search Of Space*, and *Brainstorm*, the opening track on 1972's *Doremi Fasol Latido*.

Just as Hawkwind had seemed to have the world at their feet following the hit single *Silver Machine*, they sacked bassist Lemmy in 1975 following his arrest for amphetamine possession in Canada. The following year, dancer Stacia left to raise a family, and Turner was sacked unceremoniously for, allegedly, playing over the solos of other musicians.

Turner returned to Hawkwind for a second spell that lasted from '82 to '84. In 2000 he was involved in the Hawkestra project, when former members took to the stage of Brixton Academy. Afterwards, Hawkestra effectively split into two factions: Dave Brock continued with Hawkwind, while Turner remained with a smattering of ex-Hawks as xhawkwind.com. Litigation followed over the rights to the name, and Brock won the case, forcing their rivals to trade as Space Ritual.

A pivotal figure of the counterculture scene through the sixties into the nineties, Turner had been name-checked by Jimi Hendrix at the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival, when he dedicated *Foxy Lady* to "the cat right there with the silver face".

Having played at the first ever Glastonbury Festival in 1970 – erecting a pyramid stage that became the inspiration for the current main stage – in 1977 he visited a real pyramid, and recorded in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid Of Giza while holidaying in Egypt.

"I got a taxi to the pyramid and climbed up it," Turner told *Classic Rock*. "All these old Arabs with old muskets were trying to stop me and get money, but I just sort of bypassed them, made my way to the top, sat down and played my flute." The recordings later formed the basis of 1978's *Xitintoday* album, released by Nik Turner's Sphinx.

Turner also collaborated with science-fiction author Michael Moorcock, graphic designer legend Barney Bubbles and fellow Hawkwind alumni Robert Calvert, and recorded with dozens of others including Sham 69, The Stranglers and Sting.

Relations between Turner and Dave Brock were stormy, but he remained firm friends with former bandmate Lemmy, and played a solo-sax eulogy at his funeral in 2016.

Days after Turner's passing, Steve Hillage admitted he was "still reeling from the loss" of a friend of more than 50 years' standing. "Nik was one of a kind, an inspiring and warm-hearted human being, always game for musical adventures," Hillage posted on social media. "With his departure this world is a lesser place, as his Spirit rides free."

"To me, it's [all] entertainment, with an agenda of spreading joy and love and that sort of thing," Turner told *The Quietus* in 2013. "I worry about being too overtly hippy, but peace and love are not fashionable sentiments in some quarters and I think they should be." **DL/MA/IF**

Jerry Lee Lewis

September 29, 1935 – October 28, 2022

Rock'n'roll innovator Jerry Lee Lewis died on October 28. The news was announced by his publicist following incorrect reports of his death earlier the same week. The singer-songwriter and pianist, who was known for hits including *Great Balls Of Fire* and *Whole Lot Of Shakin' Going On*, was 87 years old.

Jerry Lee Lewis was perhaps rock's first ever anti-hero. Before the likes of Sid Vicious or Axl Rose, he had been rock'n'roll's premier bad boy. Jerry Lee wasn't the first rocker to shock polite society, but he was the first to unconsciously push its acceptance of the new music to its limits. In his wake, countless others would attempt to pull the same trick. Few would have anything like the same impact.

Like many of rock'n'roll's original instigators, at the heart of the Lewis story was a lifelong struggle between religion and rock'n'roll. Born in Ferriday, Louisiana into a community in which Christian belief coloured and shaped everyday life, Lewis considered becoming a preacher. Even after turning professional, he was tempted to devote his life to God.

Most notably there was the infamous *Great Balls Of Fire* session, when Lewis decided halfway through recording that the song was the work of the devil – it took all of producer Sam Phillips's persuasion to cajole him into completing it.

"The conflict inside Jerry Lee was not a thing of books and movie scripts," noted his biographer Rick Bragg, "but a real wounding thing."

Many obituaries have focused on his marriage to his 13-year-old cousin Myra Gail, its uncovering by the British press, and the tsunami of scandal that engulfed him. Up till then, Lewis had been the brightest new rock sensation, the latest (and final) star to emerge from Sun Records stable. *Whole Lot Of Shakin' Goin' On* had reached No.3 in the *Billboard* chart, *Great Balls Of Fire* had been a UK No.1 (one of the few rock records to achieve this feat in the 1950s).

With Elvis set to enter the army, the throne was there for the taking. Then came that British tour, the fall-out, and a number of mediocre records that failed to capture the public imagination in the same way. "They scalped him," was Sam Phillips's verdict on the scandal. "So many people wanted to… 'do in' rock'n'roll and this was just what they were looking for."

Indeed, when Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and others died the following year, it seemed that the entertainment establishment and the forces of conservatism might have won, and that rock'n'roll itself could be over.

It wasn't, of course. Lewis's own career recovered, although it was never quite the same when he re-emerged after an obligatory stint in the sin bin. He tried different formulae, switched styles, even discarding his piano for a harpsichord on the brilliantly titled 1965 single *Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu*. Eventually he managed to successfully reinvent himself as a respectable country performer, and as the 60s shaded into the 70s, he chalked up a number of US hits in this style.

Every so often, though, the hellraiser of old poked his head above the parapet to remind fans what the fuss had been about in the first place. Most notably there was the time when he performed at the Grand Ol' Opry in January 1973. Lewis overran his allotted time, swore and broke the strict 'no rock' rule by playing *Whole Lotta Shakin'* and *Chantilly Lace* (with his foot, no less.) Needless to say, the Nashville establishment was not impressed.

Around this time, his drug intake and out-of-control behaviour began to increase. Lewis had been a consumer of amphetamines since the late 50s, but as the 70s progressed, his life unravelled. He accidentally shot his bassist in 1977, the drug and driving offences piled up, and his financial situation deteriorated: in 1979 the US authorities seized most of his property and possessions.

Eventually he managed to straighten out his affairs, and benefited from the revival of interest in his music engendered by the 1989 biopic *Great Balls Of Fire*, for which he recorded the soundtrack. However, unlike Sun labelmate Johnny Cash, Lewis was never adopted as an icon by a new generation.

Lewis's arrogance seemed to allow him to override the sort of misfortunes that would have sunk lesser men – and indeed did for many of his contemporaries. And it must have been a source of not-inconsiderable satisfaction to him knowing that of all rock's great pioneers, its wildest, most self-destructive son managed to nearly outlive them all. **WS**

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Garry Roberts
June 16, 1950 – November 9, 2022

The Boomtown Rats have confirmed the loss of their "friend and guitarist", a co-founding member of the Irish punk-meets-new wave-meets rock band. Roberts was 72 years old. A statement credited to Bob Geldof, Pete Briquette, Simon Crowe, Darren Beale and Alan Dunne said: "We have known Garry since we were children and so we feel strangely adrift without him tonight. Safe travels and thanks for everything, mate." No cause of death has been announced

Jeff Cook
August 27, 1949 – November 7, 2022

Jeff Cook, who played fiddle, guitar and keyboards, was a founding member of American country rockers Alabama, with whom he played from 1969. He also released collaborations with Charlie Daniels, and *Star Trek* actor William Shatner. Alabama were inducted into the Country Music Hall Of Fame in 2005. Cook left them in 2017 after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, but returned for a 50th anniversary tour in March this year. He was 73.

Dave Tangye
Died October 1, 2022

Black Sabbath's early road manager has succumbed to cancer. Dave Tangye also worked as Ozzy Osbourne's personal assistant from 1975 to '77. Tangye once described his role with Ozzy as "the best worst job you could ever have". He co-wrote the book *How Black Was Our Sabbath* with fellow crew member Graham Wright, published in 2004. He was also involved with UFO, Scorpions, the Rolling Stones and Tina Turner.

Daniel Fawcett
Died November 6, 2022

Brian Voller of Canadian band Helix has revealed the news of the murder of the group's former guitar player. Daniel Fawcett, 52, was a member of Helix from 2002 to 2004, and appeared on their 2004 album *Rockin' In My Outer Space*. "Dan was a sweet guy – he was always smiling – and a great guitar player as well," Vollmer commented via social media. "All I can say is that both [my wife] Lynda and I are in shock."

Danny 'Monsta O' Devoux
Died October 12, 2022

Monsta O, of the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E., has passed away of unknown cause. He was 56. BYT formed in Carson, California, and although known mostly as a hip-hop act, they were much beloved of Faith No More, and in 1993 the two bands collaborated on the song *Another Body Murdered* for the soundtrack to the movie *Judgment Night*. Their 1990 album *New Funky Nation* included a fiery anthem titled *Pickin' Up Metal* that began with: *'Hey all you headbangers! Are you ready to party?!'*

Ed Mitchell
March 21, 1970 - November 4, 2022

Classic Rock contributor and former Editor of *The Blues* magazine Ed Mitchell has died aged 52. He had been suffering from cancer.

Ed grew up in Gourock, west Scotland. As a schoolboy he was obsessed by guitar playing and his favourite band at the time was Madness. In adulthood his tastes expanded into country, blues and rock'n'roll. He loved The Who, The Beatles, The Jam, Bruce Springsteen and Mötley Crüe, and had encyclopaedic knowledge of guitar players such as Roy Buchanan, Danny Gatton and Duane Allman. But when Madness originally split the same week that he started his first job in October 1986, he joked that it marked the point where his childhood ended.

The job was at McCormack's, a famous Glaswegian guitar shop, where he installed a full-length mirror. "He'd encourage punters to pose with the guitars before buying," says Henry Yates, who started writing for *Total Guitar* around the same time as Mitchell.

"His playful take on rock'n'roll flowed into his writing style, which was funny and enthusiastic. As a music journalist, Ed couldn't have been po-faced if he'd tried. I've never known anyone who was so passionate about so many different genres."

The years in McCormack's shop were the perfect grounding for the role of Reviews Editor on *Total Guitar*, where he was employed by future *Classic Rock* Editor-in-Chief, Scott Rowley. Soon Ed was writing features, interviews, album reviews, how-tos. His guitar-modding column 'Ed's Shed' appeared in print on both sides of the Atlantic, in both *Total Guitar* and *Guitar World*. He also wrote for *Classic Rock* and *Guitarist*. Between them, the websites *Louder, MusicRadar* and *Guitar World* host more than 400 of his articles – and that's just the ones that made it online.

In 2012 he became Editor of *The Blues*, a sister title to *Classic Rock*, designed to cover the resurgent blues scene headed up by the likes of Joe Bonamassa, as well as bring serious appreciation to the original bluesmen.

Emma Johnston was Deputy Editor. "Ed was one of the funniest, quickest-witted people I've known," she says, "with a fantastically dark, razor-sharp sense of humour and a complete inability to suffer fools gladly or silently. He was fiercely loyal to his friends, as well as a brilliant writer and an encyclopaedia of music."

"As an editor he was a brilliant whirlwind of inspired chaos," adds Yates, "seemingly pulling off every issue at the last minute like a monthly great escape – probably why the issues he helmed felt so energetic and exciting to read."

Ed was a great musician, too. He would play with Stephen Lawson, Editor of *Total Guitar*. "His wife Julie christened us The Boo Hoo Brothers when she heard us practising my melancholic country-folk songs in their house," says Steve. "His playing was a mix of no-frills Donald 'Duck' Dunn-style groove and McCartney-esque melody. He had so much feel and taste. Actually, he had more than that, he had soul."

The Blues was closed by its owners TeamRock in June 2016, then facing the financial troubles that would bankrupt it by the year's end. Ed was already dogged by health problems, and went freelance, continuing to write for *Classic Rock* and *Guitarist*.

He remained in good humour right until the end. "I've been in and out of more hospitals than Jimmy Savile," he jokingly emailed us. "I had a stroke and then treatment for the cancer in my spine. It's been a right laugh!

"I survived working for TeamRock," he joked. "Cancer isn't that bad." **SR**

Dan McCafferty

14 October 1946 – 8 November 2022

The former frontman with Scottish hard rock veterans Nazareth, Dan McCafferty, has died aged 76. He had been suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). McCafferty co-founded the band in 1968 from the remnants of The Shadettes. The singer had known bass player Pete Agnew since the age of five. On their first day at school, the pair were asked to share a double desk. They remained besties ever since.

Agnew broke the news of McCafferty's passing with a social-media post that said: "This is the saddest announcement I ever had to make. Maryann and the family have lost a wonderful loving husband and father, I have lost my best friend, and the world has lost one of the greatest singers who ever lived. Too upset to say anything more at this time."

Nazareth turned professional in 1971, and until McCafferty was forced to retire from touring in 2013, one or the other of the pair would call the other and jokingly suggest: "D'ya fancy giving it another twelve months?'"

The quartet's best known album, *Hair Of The Dog*, was released in 1975 and sold more than two million copies worldwide, on the back of their cover of the Boudleaux Bryant ballad *Love Hurts*, previously covered by the Everly Brothers, which was gave Nazareth a Top 10 hit in the US. The album's title track, also a hit single, was later covered by Guns N' Roses on 1993's *The Spaghetti Incident?*

Although Nazareth notched an impressive run of hits that included *Broken Down Angel, Bad Bad Boy, My White Bicycle* and *May The Sunshine,* it's safe to say that fame and success never went to their heads. When given £100 by their manager to buy stage gear from London's Kensington Market, Agnew admitted that the pair returned home clutching just a couple of T-shirts, "having spent about ninety pounds on lager".

Throughout the band's career they remained disarmingly normal and uproariously modest despite their prodigious levels of talent, and were intensely proud of being a blue-collar working rock band.

Guns N' Roses, huge fans of Nazareth, hired guitarist Manny Charlton as an early producer for their full-length debut *Appetite For Destruction*, although the sessions proved too chaotic. Axl Rose was very public about McCafferty's gravelly vocals influencing his own style. Indeed, in 1990 McCafferty was asked to sing *Love Hurts* at Rose's wedding to Erin Everly. "Around eighteen people from their management kept phoning me to ask – eighteen! I eventually told them I was busy, which I probably was," McCafferty told *Classic Rock*. "I laughed because the song seemed to last for longer than the marriage."

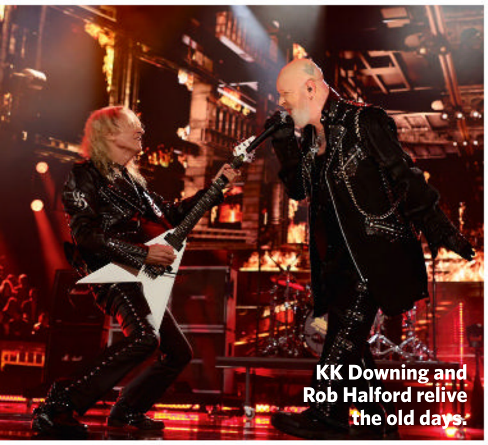
Various Nazareth line-ups continued throughout the 80s and 90s, although for too long they concentrated on foreign markets, which gradually sank their profile at home in the UK.

Although he had reluctantly ended his live performances with Nazareth, who continue to record and play live with Carl Sentance as his successor, McCafferty walked away from the band for good following a final album, *Rock 'N' Roll Telephone,* in June 2014. His COPD – a chronic condition that restricts the ability to breathe – was worsening. McCafferty told *Classic Rock*: "I could make another record, but getting up to do an hour and three-quarters, and get people to pay money to come and see me, I can't do that."

In 2019 he released his third solo album, *Last Testament*.

A statement from Swedish rockers Europe described McCafferty's voice as "mesmerising", while Former Rainbow/MSG singer Graham Bonnet said: "Dan was a larger-than-life personality, quick with a smile and very easy-going."

"Very sad to hear of the passing of Nazareth's Dan McCafferty today," tweeted Ricky Warwick, frontman with Black Star Riders and Thin Lizzy. "I was honoured to be his company on the Rock Meets Classic Tour in 2016." **DL**



KK Downing and Rob Halford relive the old days.

KK Rejoins Priest At Hall Of Fame

Downing returns to the band for the first time in 13 years.

It was something that fans of Judas Priest thought they would never see again – guitarist KK Downing back on stage with the band. But it happened at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. Since walking away from Priest in 2011, Downing had engaged in a war of words with the group he'd co-founded at the tail end of the 60s.

Inducted by Alice Cooper at a ceremony in Los Angeles, Downing was part of a line-up that included three guitarists (current man Richie Faulkner, Downing, and Glenn Tipton who retired from touring in 2018) and two drummers (Les Binks, a member from 1977 to 1979, playing in tandem with the current man on the drum stool, Scott Travis). The expanded line-up performed a three-song medley consisting of *You've Got Another Thing Comin'*, *Breaking The Law* and *Living After Midnight*.

During his acceptance speech, Priest frontman Rob Halford said: "I'm the gay guy in the band. That is what heavy metal is all about. We call ourselves the heavy metal community which is all-inclusive. No matter what your sexual identity is, what you look like, the colour of your skin, the faith that you believe or don't believe in, everybody's welcome."

Also at the HOF, Halford fulfilled a lifetime dream when he joined Dolly Parton on a version of her hit *Jolene* that also featured Pink, Simon Le Bon of Duran Duran, Sheryl Crow, Annie Lennox and the husband-and-wife duo of Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo.

Benatar and Giraldo performed *All Fired Up*, *Love Is A Battlefield* and, of course, *Heartbreaker*. Aerosmith's Steven Tyler made a surprise appearance with Eminem.

Duran Duran were also inducted at the ceremony, and their absent former guitarist Andy Taylor sent a letter explaining that he is currently battling stage four prostate cancer. It stated: "My current condition is not immediately life threatening [though] there is no cure."

"I'm so very proud of these four brothers; I'm amazed at their durability, and I'm overjoyed at accepting this award," Taylor continued. "I often doubted the day would come. I'm sure as hell glad I'm around to see it." **DL**

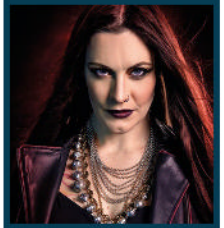
NEWS

Brian Johnson is drawing a line under the enduring rumour that his predecessor in **AC/DC**, Bon Scott, wrote any lyrics for the album *Back In Black*. "Once and for all, I want to put this baby to bed," the singer tells *Rolling Stone*.

Richie Sambora says there's a "possibility" of him reuniting with Bon Jovi next year. The guitarist walked away from the band in 2013. At an awards show, when asked specifically whether he'd consider playing with Bon Jovi as headliners for Glastonbury 2023, Sambora said that he and Jon Bon Jovi are "talking a bit".

Former Rush bassist/vocalist **Geddy Lee**'s as-yet untitled autobiography is published on May 16 by Harper-Collins, in hardback and also as an ebook.

Foreigner will play a farewell tour in 2023, kicking off in the US in July. The move ends speculation that the band are planning to carry on after the retirement of guitarist Mick Jones, their only original member.



Nightwish's **Floor Jansen** (pictured) is "recovering well" from surgery for breast cancer. "I'm not back to a 100% but I have no doubt the shows will give me the power push I need to rock with all of you on the upcoming European tour," she wrote.

Ronnie Wood has revealed that drums by Charlie Watts, who died last year, will feature on the **Rolling Stones**' next album, which is currently being recorded.

WELCOME BACK

Blue October

Justin Furstenfeld on slitting throats, smelling good and getting lumped in with "knuckle-dragging rock".

When it comes to Blue October's singer Justin Furstenfeld, it's difficult to square the man with the music. *Spinning The Truth Around Part 1*, the eleventh album from the Texan band who formed in 1995, is resolutely straight-faced, its yearning electro-rock coming on like Springsteen discovering a modular synth. Yet by Furstenfeld's own admission, while he takes the music seriously, he reserves the right to be extremely silly in interviews.

What are your favourite memories from recording the latest album?
It was hilarious, because the songs are so serious that we would make jokes out of them. So every single song has some X-rated version too. When it comes to the material, we're professional. But when it comes to attitude, we have mouths like a sailor.

> **"It didn't matter if I was famous, I just wanted to write music."**

It's an emotional album. Do you cry easier as you get older?
No. Actually I don't cry any more. It's kinda weird. Maybe it's the Paxil [antidepressant] that I'm on. Because I just don't cry. I used to cry a lot. But now I'm just kinda like, the world is so beautiful and life is good.

You describe the title track of the album as "like Springsteen saying goodbye to someone".
Well, that was me being a little pretentious, I guess. I love Springsteen's love songs, the way they sound like they just rolled off his tongue because that was what he was going through.

Blue October have more than a billion streams. When the band started out all those years ago, did you ever think it would reach that level?
Yeah, definitely. When I was a kid I always told my mom it didn't matter if I was famous or anything, I just wanted to write music and have a backpack full of songs.

At the start, did you get grief for not sounding like a traditional Texas band?
[Mishearing the question] The only thing I get grief about is that we got big when the American knuckle-dragging rock got big. So now, whenever you listen to Spotify, we'll have a song like *Spinning The Truth Around*, and then, right after it, Godsmack comes on. And I'm like: "What the hell?" [Adopts meathead voice] I got beef, man, with streaming services and their stupid algorithms!

This year you played a villain in the action movie *Section 8*.
I'm trying to get my feet wet in the acting business in America. Right now I only accept roles that are bad guys. Because I'm such a sweetheart and teddy bear that I like going around and stabbing people in the throat.

Blue October are coming to the UK in April. Are you excited by that?
The UK is my favourite freaking place in the world. You know what you have that no one else has? Penhaligon's. It's a perfumery that was started in the UK, that Winston Churchill used to wear. I'm obsessed with smells, right? So whenever I go to London, I go to Penhaligon's and I'm in heaven.

That's the first time a rock star has told me that.
What were you expecting me to say? [Ozzy voice] "I love all the drugs and naked bodies"? Not me. I'm just a white-trash boy who likes to smell good. **HY**

Spinning The Truth Around Part 1 is out now via Up/Down/Brando Records.

FLOOR JANSEN: STEVE BRIGHT; BLUE OCTOBER: DAVE ARNOLD/PRESS; JUDAS PRIEST: GETTY

> "Growing up, we were around a lot of creativity and a lot of people very dedicated to what they're doing."

★ HIGH HOPES

Taipei Houston

Abandoning the traditional rock four-piece format, the Ulrich lads are a determined duo.

When your dad is the drummer in the biggest metal band on the planet, it's safe to say music is in your blood. But multi-instrumentalists Myles and Layne Ulrich, the sons of Metallica's Lars Ulrich, are determined to carve their own path.

Sure, Myles was listening to Black Sabbath by the time he was four, but the duo, who make fuzzy rock'n'roll as Taipei Houston (think of a punk-indebted Royal Blood drying out in the desert and you're on the right track), have side-stepped stadium metal to take inspiration from alt. chameleons like Radiohead, Jack White and Arctic Monkeys. And while they admit that Lars has chipped in with the odd nugget of industry advice, he's left them alone while they developed a turbo-charged sound that's brought them tours with Muse and Melvins.

"All the artists we like the most have their own unique thing going on," says Layne. "That's the most inspiring thing: to sound different and sound like yourselves. That's something that we always have tried to aim for."

The duo never bothered formulating a Plan B. Growing up in San Francisco, their childhood was spent learning to play instruments and devouring everything from classic and modern rock, to hip-hop, electronica and jazz. All the while they were hanging out with their dad backstage at Metallica shows, although Myles credits his mother, physician Skylar Satenstein, for keeping them grounded and in class instead of on tour buses.

"I'm grateful for that," he says, although by that point he already knew music would be his path in life. "We were around a lot of creativity growing up, and around a lot of people being very dedicated to what they're doing."

Although the brothers had jammed together casually over the years, Taipei Houston didn't become an official project until the pandemic hit. Locked down with time on their hands, over the next 14 months they set about writing the songs that would become their stomping debut album, *Once Bit Never Bored*, later recorded in LA. Hard-wiring both bass and guitar sounds from Layne's bass, it's an approach that is heavily influenced by Royal Blood; the Ulrichs don't have set roles in the band, instead each of them switches between vocal, drum and bass parts throughout the tracks.

"We had planned to get a singer," Layne muses. Then Myles started playing a lot of guitar, and I started singing, so we were like: 'How can we actually just do it with just us two?'"

Going it alone has been a challenge they've relished ever since.

"What I really like about being a duo," Layne says, "is that because it's restrained, you have to get really creative with it."

"You have to be constantly thinking about your limitations," Myles adds. "And also how to break your own rules." **DL**

Once Bit Never Bored is out now via C3 Records.

FOR FANS OF...

"What's amazing about *In Rainbows*, and about Radiohead generally, is that it doesn't ever feel like they have some sort of formula," Layne says of an influence.

"Every Radiohead album is doing something new and different," Myles adds. "One of the main things we think about is what can we do that's still new or unexplored in rock?"

THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

Metallica

Master Of Puppets

From redefining metal in the 80s to creating pop-culture history with TV drama series *Stranger Things*, it's a thrash metal anthem that has influenced generations.

Words: **Joe Daly**

Hot off of the meteoric success of their 1984 album *Ride The Lightning*, Metallica found themselves in a curious position. Bursting with fiery ambition and lofty compositional ideas, by the summer of 1985 they had effectively outgrown thrash, just as that very scene had begun to explode. That third album would be a crucible in which they would forge all of the speed and aggression of their first two releases with vibrant new melodies and incisive lyrics. Today the *Master Of Puppets* album is viewed as the unqualified high point for a band whose career plays out as a series of high points. And nothing exemplifies its brilliance as perfectly as its anthemic title track.

It was the summer of 1985, and on July 14 the band got together in the garage where they bashed out the first round of demos for what would become the follow-up to *Lightning*. Among them was a rough instrumental that would soon be revved up, stretched out, pumped full of blazing riffs, jaw-dropping solos and anthemic lyrics. It was titled *Master Of Puppets*. And Metallica sussed that it would be the title track of the forthcoming album.

That September, they decamped to Sweet Silence studio in Copenhagen to record it with producer Flemming Rasmussen. For the title track, they went all in. Building on its main riff, they added an array of tempo changes, solos, grooves and lyrics until settling on its final form. Instinctively, they realised that they had tapped into something genuinely poignant, and knew they had to absolutely nail it.

For a track built on heavily distorted guitar parts, the riffs are taut, compressed and lethal. To give the riffs that lean sense of attack, Rasmussen used some studio trickery, directing the band to tune their instruments slightly lower so that when recorded with fast-moving tape the resulting track would be in tune. "We banged it out a couple of times and decided on the one with the best feeling," Rasmussen told *Rolling Stone*, "because they'd have to play it live." Of course, 'live' does not equate to 'simple'.

Comprised of four distinct movements and clocking in at a total of eight minutes and 35 seconds, *Master Of Puppets* begins with 'the riff' – that taut, distorted power chord, followed by three sharp, descending chords before ripping into the track's galloping 4/4 groove. From there it plays out with unrelenting aggression in a standard verse/chorus format until fading at the echo of '*Master!*' at 3:30 and melting into the spiralling dual-fretted harmonies of the next movement. Aching with visceral melancholic beauty, the solo builds into a second duet, before the two guitars coalesce in a siege of power riffs, followed by a key change and new verses beginning with '*Master… Master… Where's the dream that I've been after?*' The next movement erupts with another scorching solo, with a bridge in the middle of it, and finally a connection back to the riff.

At this point, the modern rock blueprint would have directed the band to hit the chorus two more times and fade out. Instead, nearly seven minutes into the song, they introduce another new verse, pile into the pre-chorus and then take one more triumphant run at the chorus. Fittingly, the song drives to its finish with 'the riff', finally ending with an echo-drenched melange of the band laughing and a spectral wash of reversed guitars.

At nearly nine minutes – double the length of most mainstream rock songs of that time – the track would draw practically zero radio attention. But its extravagant length is intrinsic to its power; stitched together, the separate parts play out with cinematic grandeur, with moments of frenzied aggression balanced by interludes of arresting fragility. It was an audacious move for a hard-partying, give-no-fucks band known for dispensing some of the fastest and heaviest music of their day. But it underscored the take-no-prisoners mind-set of Metallica: they weren't interested in easy; the harder, the better. As Ulrich told Mick Wall: "In the past we'd do a rough version of a song and I'd go home and time it and go, 'It's only seven and a half minutes!' I'd think: 'Fuck, we've got to put another couple of riffs in there… If we can make the number a bit longer, a bit more interesting, and still make it work, then why not?"

Lyrically, *Master Of Puppets* is a cautionary tale about drugs and the terrifying loss of free will experienced, written by someone in the throes of addiction. James Hetfield captures the devastating sense of powerlessness

© METALLICA

METALLICA PLAY ALONG WITH IT ALL

The most viral-heavy metal moment in TV history came full circle when Metallica shot a play-along with 'that scene' from the TV series *Stranger Things*.

The pivotal segment in the Season 4 finale set the internet alight back in the summer, even prompting a response from Metallica themselves, who described it as "an incredible honour to be such a big part of Eddie's journey".

Master Of Puppets' appearance in the show saw the track attract millions of new streams and shoot up charts across the globe. Then, the band shot a TikTok-style duet with the Eddie Munson scene in the style of a brilliantly entertaining *Master Of Puppets* play-along. All four members of the band dressed up for the occasion, wearing the same 'Hellfire Club' T-shirt designs worn in the show by Eddie and his fellow *Dungeons And Dragons* playing buddies.

"Eddie… this is for you!" read the caption. Well played, fellas.

Metalhead Eddie Munson (Joseph Quinn) in *Stranger Things*.

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THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
July 2, 1986

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.22,
US No.35

PERSONNEL
James Hetfield
Lead vocals, rhythm guitar, first guitar solo
Kirk Hammett
Lead guitar
Cliff Burton
Bass, backing vocals
Lars Ulrich
Drums

WRITTEN BY
Cliff Burton, Kirk Hammett, James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich

PRODUCED BY
Flemming Rasmussen, Metallica

LABEL
Elektra

"*Master Of Puppets* deals pretty much with drugs. How things get switched around – instead of you controlling what you're taking and doing, it's drugs controlling you."

James Hetfield

ROSS HALFIN

***Puppets* masters: (l-r) Cliff Burton, Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield, Kirk Hammett.**

wrought by the addiction in a highly poetic manner, creating a dialogue of betrayal between the addict and his drugs, who have become his Master. In 1988, Hetfield told *Thrasher* magazine: "*Master Of Puppets* deals pretty much with drugs. How things get switched around – instead of you controlling what you're taking and doing, it's drugs controlling you…"

Master Of Puppets is one of only two tracks on the album that is credited to all four members (along with *Damage, Inc.*), and it held a special place for then-bassist Cliff Burton. In 1986, the year of its release, he said: "My favourite song is *Master Of Puppets*. I think it's the best Metallica song yet." The world would soon agree.

The first time that Metallica played *Master Of Puppets* live was just days after they finished recording the album. The band were playing the San Francisco Civic Auditorium on New Year's Eve in 1985, for 7,000 rowdy revellers, and it was an immediate hit. *Master Of Puppets* easily earned a spot on Metallica's set-list when they headed out on tour in March 1986, played second (following *Battery*, as it does on the album) every night.

Today it remains the fan-favourite. It's Metallica's most-played live song and the album after which it is titled has received platinum certification several times over.

In 2022, the track experienced a feverish rebirth, thanks to the popular TV drama series *Stranger Things*, which features *Master Of Puppets* in a pivotal scene in season four's final episode. [***Mild spoiler in the next sentence alert***]: in the instantly classic Season 4 scene, the mega-popular character Eddie Munson shreds his way through the track as a diversion while his friends execute the final stage of their plan. It was actually the second time that *Stranger Things* used a Metallica track; an episode of Season 2 featured *The Four Horsemen* (from 1983 debut *Kill 'Em All*). The internet all but broke, with fans dousing the moment in hyperbole, proclaiming it "one of the most iconic scenes in television of this year", one of the "three best needle drops of the year", and even "the greatest scene of all time".

Overnight, a new generation of fans who previously were wholly unfamiliar with the band suddenly turned on to Metallica. Some grouchy metalheads lamented the attention as an unwanted intrusion into metal culture, but most metalheads welcomed the celebration. Even Metallica got in on the fun, releasing a split-screen Instagram video with them playing live along with the scene while wearing the 'Hellfire Club' shirts from the show. The post notched more than a million 'likes' in a matter of days. No surprise, then, that *Master Of Puppets* promptly re-entered the top 50 in both the UK and US. A week later it cracked the *Billboard* Hot 100 for the first time ever.

STRANGER THINGS HAVE HAPPENED

How the hit TV series also made 2022 Kate Bush's biggest year.

"I thought the track would get some attention", Kate Bush told Emma Barnett on *Woman's Hour* in June this year, talking about *Running Up That Hill*, "but I never imagined it would be anything like this. It's so exciting – but it's quite shocking really, isn't it? I mean, the whole world's gone mad."

While few would dispute Bush's assessment of the current state of the world, you'd have got long odds a year ago on her 1985 hit single becoming one of the biggest hits of 2022. Thirty-seven years after it initially reached No.3 in the UK, its extraordinary resurgence was prompted by its prominent inclusion in the fourth season of *Stranger Things*, the 1980s-set Netflix series which Bush said she had "watched from the first series onwards".

The stats are impressive. *Running* became the UK's most downloaded song of the summer, beating the big-hitter likes of Harry Styles and Beyoncé, with 42,000 sales and 86.6 million streams between June and August, racing to No.1 and making Bush, just before she turned 64, the oldest woman to top the chart. It was also the longest ever gap between an artist or band's number ones (44 years after 1978's *Wuthering Heights* made the top spot). It even went top-three in the US, her first ever Top-10 there. "We've all been astounded to watch the track explode!" the usually private Bush enthused.

Although she gamely broke cover for that *Woman's Hour* chat, it's unlikely the second coming of *Running Up That Hill* will mean she'll make any attempt at all to boss another news cycle. When Bush made her first live appearances for 35 years at her Hammersmith Apollo residency in 2014, her back catalogue was parked in the album chart for a while and a new generation wondered what the fuss was about. Now it's the new generation leading the parade. One suspects that will be sufficient gratification for Bush, especially as the album from which the track came, *Hounds Of Love*, is one of her own favourites – if that 2014 set-list was anything to go by.

Of course, this isn't the first time a hook-up with a big TV show or film has boosted a career that had settled on to a satisfactory plateau. From the 1980s Levi's ads that revived old soul music, to the present-day turbo-charging of TikTok – not forgetting the same season of *Stranger Things*' shout-outs to Metallica, The Cramps and Siouxsie & The Banshees – it happens. And *Running Up That Hill*, which was played at the 2012 London Olympics closing ceremony, hadn't been hiding under a rock. Yet this revival ran and ran, giving Bush a 2022 that made you believe in strange phenomena.

"What's really wonderful is this is a whole new audience who, in a lot of cases, have never heard of me", she said. "And I love that. The thought of all these young people hearing the song for the first time and discovering it, it's very special". **CR**

METALLICA: ROSS HALFIN; KATE BUSH: GEMA IMAGES/ICONICPIX. KATE BUSH WORDS: CHRIS ROBERTS

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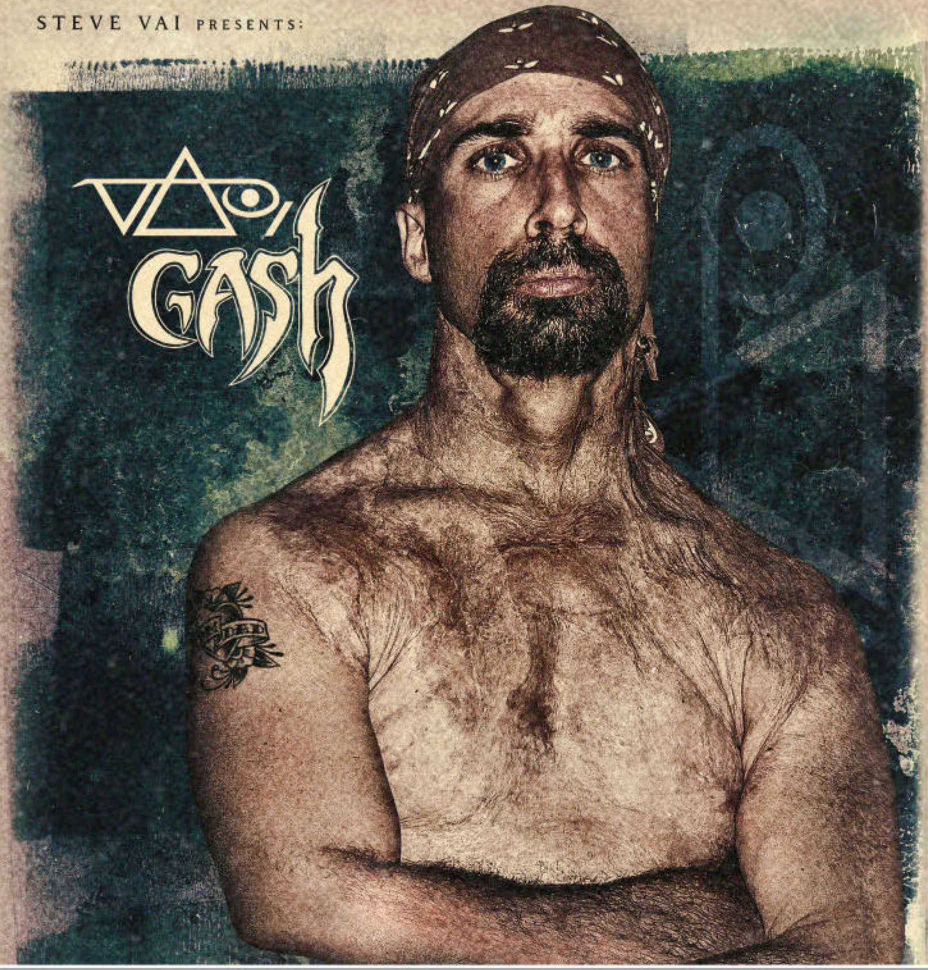

Q&A

David Crosby

The veteran singer and songwriter on his first solo live album, his drive, inter-personal chemistry, and feeling "blessed".

Words: **Simon Harper**

Famed and celebrated for the timeless songs he created while a member of The Byrds and Crosby, Stills and Nash (and Young), David Crosby has also enjoyed a solo career that, having started relatively slowly, producing four albums in 43 years, since 2014 has seen a creative renaissance, ensuring that his name is independently synonymous with pure, emotive songs full of rich harmonies.

Five acclaimed albums followed over the next eight years. At the core of 2014's *Croz*, 2017's *Sky Trails* and last year's *For Free* were Crosby and his son James Raymond, while 2016's *Lighthouse*, and 2018's *Here If You Listen* were made in collaboration with the Lighthouse Band, the collective name for his collaborations with singer/songwriters Becca Stevens, Michelle Willis, and Michael League, the multi-instrumentalist band leader of eclectic jazz outfit Snarky Puppy. *Live At The Capitol Theatre*, recorded with the Lighthouse Band in 2018 and comprised of songs old and new delivered – and received – gloriously, is Crosby's first ever solo live album and DVD. We caught up with the irrepressible Croz to talk about that and his continuing musical odyssey.

Releasing as much music as you have done recently suggests that it is, for you, more than just making a living.
It's not making a living. I have money. It's been a desire to make all the possible music that I can in this little space where I still can make music. I'm a human being; we peter out somewhere after eighty years old, and I'm eighty-one… It's the one contribution I can make. The one place I can make anything better is to make all the music that I possibly can. I'm really happy about the live album, because I think it's an exceptional chemistry, and it's a very honest record. We didn't hide any flaws, we didn't fix anything; that's really us.

Was not wanting to peter out what inspired this creative streak, or was it already happening and you wanted to run with it?
What inspired it was me quitting CSN. When I quit CSN and did *Croz*, that was the point at which I just hit a real streak. I'd been holding back somewhat and I wasn't happy with my situation, wasn't happy with the chemistry, and just didn't feel like doing my best work. And all of a sudden I had a clear path and I just really ran with it. I have been having a wonderful time.

One of the main reasons for the flurry of records is having two bands, one band being the Lighthouse Band. The four of us have a chemistry that was explosive to me, and I have been nursing it… We have another [album] in the can waiting to drop. When we get on stage it's a very honest relationship; we're not trying to do showbiz, we're trying to make the best music we possibly can. And people like it, you can tell it. And it feels good.

What do you think is the secret behind that chemistry?
I don't know, man. It has to do, of course, with their proficiency at their vocals and playing. But the way that human beings meld together to make a creative process in the rare times that it happens, there's so many variables that I doubt that anybody's ever going to be able to chart it out scientifically. I can't, and I do it. It is what I do. I can't really even describe the process to you, but there is a chemistry, and it happens between certain people – Becker and Fagen, Lennon and McCartney. Some people work together and it's explosive.

A song you played that night at the Capitol Theatre was *1974*, which the band reworked from a demo you made forty years ago. Why had it lain dormant for so long?
It's just one of those scraps of melding harmony stuff that… You know, you don't want to waste stuff, so you save it. Michael ran into that one and said: "Man, come on, let's put words to this. This is a really nice set of changes." And so we did.

After the fourth song, *Vagrants Of Venice*, you tell the audience: "This could possibly turn into a really good night." Why did that night feel so special?
It was the last night of a tour. We had polished ourselves up pretty well, and we felt good, man. It's always a feeling thing. You know, you can do everything by the book, correct and perfect, and it doesn't work at all, and sometimes everything is wrong and it works great anyway. There's a feel thing to it, and I can't explain it, but this was one of those nights. We knew it, we felt it - you can see it in our faces.

The show ended with a sparkling rendition of *Woodstock*, a song of hope and possibility, and feels like a very auspicious end to proceedings.
Yeah. I thought it was free of most precepts, most normal restrictions in people's thinking. It was a pretty wide spectrum – we come from folk and jazz and pop, and we are very different people from different generations and different countries – but what happens is very human. It's very good. And the audience was very sophisticated and really into it, and wasn't looking for hits, and they were into what we were doing. And that was a complete joy to us.

'Hope' and 'possibility' are also two words that come to mind when considering recent footage of *Woodstock*'s writer, your friend Joni Mitchell, whose recuperations have enabled her to return to the stage recently. How did you feel seeing that?
I think she's wonderful. I think she's the best singer-songwriter of our times, and every bit of ground that she can recover is a joy to me. Wasn't that Brandi Carlisle that did that with her? Man, she deserves a lot of credit. That was a wonderful thing to do. She coaxed Joni into that, and she masterminded that whole thing, and I'm gonna find her and say thank you to her, because I just love her for doing that.

How do you feel when you sing your songs to people?
I feel completion. I feel like I'm doing my life's work. I was given the ability to do it, and I feel blessed, so I feel like I'm complete. When I sing a song well and I can take people on a little voyage some place – 'Come on, let me tell you this story' – I feel complete. I feel good. I feel whole. I feel like I'm doing my life's work.

The album and DVD Live At The Capitol Theatre by David Crosby & The Lighthouse Band is out now via BMG.

David Crosby: enjoying a late-career creative renaissance.

ANNA WEBBER/PRESS

“I feel complete. I feel good. I feel like I’m doing my life’s work.”

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—Kev Rowland, ReZonatZ

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ALBUMS OF 2022

2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

From another year of albums ranging from the brilliant to the good, the bad and the downright ugly, from established stars, up-and-comers and new kids on the block, *Classic Rock*'s critics pick the 50 best.

Words: **Rich Davenport, Paul Elliott, Dave Everley, Polly Glass, Rich Hobson, Neil Jeffries, Jo Kendall, Fraser Lewry, Dave Ling, Chris Lord, Grant Moon, David Sinclair, Henry Yates**

50 CATS IN SPACE
Kickstart The Sun HARMONY FACTORY

Not an album so much as an explosion in a melodic rock factory, *Kickstart The Sun* finds these Cats bouncing ideas around as if all nine lives depend on it. Horns parp, choirs wail, guitars soar like roving search beams, and Queen's *A Night At The Opera* hears it all and goes home with its tail between its legs. Brilliantly ludicrous and ludicrously brilliant. **FL**

Killer track: *Poke The Witch*

49 BUZZCOCKS
Sonics In The Soul CHERRY RED

Introduced at the infamous 1976 Sex Pistols gig that ignited Manchester's punk scene, Pete Shelley and Steve Diggle's partnership drove Buzzcocks until Shelley's passing in 2018. Diggle's decision to continue the band – considered unconscionable by some – is justified by *Sonics In The Soul*'s stellar songwriting and fiery performances. Crucially Diggle balances brash bangers with pop smarts (*Nothingness World*). **RD**

Killer track: *You've Changed Everything Now*

48 BONNIE RAITT
Just Like That REDWING

Bonnie Raitt's first new album in over six years, *Just Like That* offered sumptuous, wide-reaching proof that she's not done pushing herself yet. It's full of swampy, soulful blues swagger and deft guitar touches that served the likes of Little Feat and James Taylor similarly well, plus the sort of sweet and wry tones you can hear in Raitt acolytes like Susan Tedeschi, Joanne Shaw Taylor, Larkin Poe and so many more. Americana at its finest. **PG**

Killer track: *Made Up Mind*

47 THE BLACK KEYS
Dropout Boogie NONESUCH

Twenty years after they released their first album, The Black Keys are still walking the fine line between smart and simple. On latest album *Dropout Boogie* the duo from Akron, Ohio added a refreshing dash of bubblegum soul and pop to their original blues-rock package, while a stellar performance by ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons on *Good Love* takes them out of the garage and into the Texas desert. Hot stuff. **DS**

Killer track: *Good Love (feat. Billy F Gibbons)*

Bonnie Raitt

46 CARDINAL BLACK
January Came Close JUMP IN

Members of Cardiff rock'n'soul quartet Cardinal Black played together in another band more than a decade ago, so this, their first album, has been a long time coming. It was worth the wait. Featuring the bluesy, innovative stylings of guitarist Chris Buck, *January Came Close* oozes life-affirming depth from top to bottom. *Terra Firma* is sumptuous. *Jump In* is stunning. This is a precious, extraordinarily inspired debut album. **CL**

Killer track: *Where Do You Go?*

45 FM
Thirteen FRONTIERS

The cover resembles an 80s album by Satanist screamer King Diamond, but fear not. *Thirteen* is a feelgood melodic rock record in the classic FM tradition. The tunes are big, the delivery smooth, Steve Overland's voice is still as strong and pitch-perfect as it was in his twenties. And everything that's great about FM comes together on *Waiting On Love* – not just the best track on the album, but also one of the greatest AOR songs of modern times. **PE**

Killer track: *Waiting On Love*

BONNIE RAITT: KEN FRIEDMAN/PRESS

44 WHISKEY MYERS
Tornillo
WIGGY THUMP/THIRTY TIGERS

On this dazzling best-yet sixth album, six-piece Whiskey Myers have got it all going on: bar-room rockin', alt. country heritage, brass, and gospel backing singers. But *Tornillo* is no southern "kitchen sink"; it reflects the care and love injected by singer Cody Cannon, guitarist John Jeffers and the rest of the band. How else could two heart-rending ballads – *For The Kid's* and *Heart Of Stone* – be among its better tracks? **NJ**
Killer track: *Feet's*

43 NICKELBACK
Get Rollin' BMG

Twenty years after *How You Remind Me* gave these Canadians their first monster hit, Nickelback's MO hasn't changed. *Get Rollin'* has its testosterone-charged anthems and a masterful power ballad. The surprise comes with *Just One More*. With an 80s vibe and a deep lyric, it's one of the best songs Chad Kroeger has ever written. **PE**
Killer track: *Just One More*

42 FANTASTIC NEGRITO
White Jesus Black Problems STOREFRONT

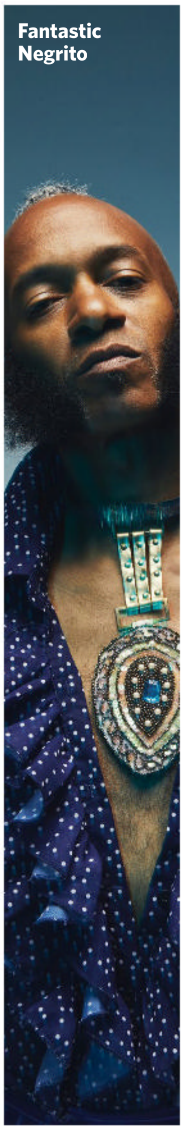
On one of the most original rock records you'll hear this year, Negrito takes his true-life tale of ancestral interracial romance and celebrates it with an imaginative, multi-layered gospel, blues, soul and funk soundtrack. Smart, heartfelt and thought-provoking, Negrito's analysis of who he is (or thought he was) and where he came from might have provided his finest hour thus far. **JK**
Killer track: *Oh Betty*

41 DAN REED NETWORK
Let's Hear It For The King
DRAKKAR ENTERTAINMENT

Since re-forming in 2012, Dan Reed Network have steadily climbed closer to their gold standard, 1989's *Slam*. Here they improve again as Reed brings melody and thought-provoking words (the title-track's *'double-decker blow-job bus'* and, on *Stumble*, the first ever lyric to place Buddha in a burlesque show), while guitarist Brion James delivers the heavy funk riffs. The combination is a mix of dancefloor bangers and full-on rockers, and it's joyful stuff right from start to finish. **NJ**
Killer track: *Starlight*

THE BLACK KEYS: © JIM HERRINGTON/PRESS; FANTASTIC NEGRITO: TRAVIS SHINN/PRESS

The Black Keys



Fantastic Negrito

TOP 5 PROG ALBUMS
Chosen by **Jo Kendall**

1 DAVID LONGDON
Door One
ENGLISH ELECTRIC RECORDINGS

The late Big Big Train frontman's posthumously released solo album was a delight for the eyes (thanks to his partner Sarah Ewing's gorgeous artwork) as well as the ears. Showcasing a love of folk, blues and classic rock amid progressive framing, Longdon spat fire (*Watch It Burn*), told stories (*No Ghost Like An Old Ghost*) and spoke poignantly (*Love Is All*).
Killer Track: *Watch It Burn*

2 THE TANGENT
Songs From The Hard Shoulder
INSIDEOUT

3 PURE REASON REVOLUTION
Above Cirrus INSIDEOUT

4 BLACK MIDI
Hellfire ROUGH TRADE

5 OCEANS OF SLUMBER
Starlight And Ash CENTURY MEDIA

40 THE HELLACOPTERS
Eyes Of Oblivion NUCLEAR BLAST

The Hellacopters blasted away the cobwebs of a 14-year hiatus with *Eyes Of Oblivion*, a whirlwind mix of retro-revivalism à la Monster Magnet, unhinged proto-punk garage rock (think The Sonics or MC5, but with Cheap Trick's additive-laced choruses) and gospel-inflected blues. Each track is brought to life in a cacophony of wailing guitars, serpentine grooves and huge hooks, Nicke Andersson and Dregen utilising everything in *The Big Book Of Brilliant Rock'n'Roll* to deliver spectacular, toe-tapping results. **RH**
Killer Track: *Reap A Hurricane*

39 MAGNUM
The Monster Roars SPV

During their 50-year career, Magnum have experienced arena-packing peaks, and bad breaks that would have crushed lesser bands. Having fought their way back to a late-career revival, only for covid to derail the tour for *The Serpent Rings* (2020), guitarist/songwriter Tony Clarkin rallied the troops and charged undeterred into the recording of *The Monster Roars*. Magnum's characteristic blend of passionate delivery and majestic melody burns bright throughout, reaching resonant high points in *All You Believe In* and *Come Holy Men*. **RD**
Killer track: *Come Holy Men*

2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

JOE LYNN TURNER

With a cracking new album and a new image – finally casting off the wig and showing his true hairless colours – the former Rainbow and Deep Purple singer is loving his fresh start.

Interview: **Paul Elliott**

On April 12, 2019, Joe Lynn Turner suffered a heart attack. During his recovery he had an epiphany; the former Rainbow and Deep Purple singer decided: "A change has to happen here."

That change brought about a new album and a new image that are true to his real self. The album, *Belly Of The Beast*, is heavier – musically and lyrically – than anything he has previously recorded. And after wearing a wig for most of his life, having lost his hair to alopecia when he was a child, Turner is now presenting his true image to the world. "I've joined the brotherhood of strong, shiny men!" he says with a laugh.

It's a big reveal – the real you.

It's the greatest thing I've ever done! But it was a huge decision to make, and I have to credit my loving wife for this. When you have the support of that one amazing person, the rest of the world can kiss your ass. She said: "You gotta do it! And this is the perfect time. New album – update yourself. You're seventy-one years old, who are you trying to impress?" I said: "Okay, I'm scared shitless but I'm gonna do it."

When you released the photo of your natural look, you received a heartfelt message of support on social media from Graham Bonnet, the singer you replaced in Rainbow back in 1980.

I know Graham very well, and that message showed what a compassionate and warm human being he is. Bless him.

Ever since you became famous with Rainbow, there were always rumours that you were wearing a wig.

It's been an open secret, yes. But I wasn't the only one.

And back then, long hair was de-rigueur for rock stars.

Right. It was a uniform.

As a child, how did you cope emotionally with losing your hair?

Well, I was born with a full head of hair, but when I was three my mom was washing me in the tub and it all fell out. You want a laugh? My mother tried this treatment using eggs – I had to sit there with all this yolk drying on my head! And I had no eyebrows – nothing. My eyebrows now are tattoos, so you have some facial definition. Without that you look like a fucking alien! So yeah, it was tough when I realised I looked different from other kids, and when I got to kindergarten I felt really ostracised. When I was seven I got a wig, and it looked ridiculous. Later I got a better wig. But there was still the bullying at school. I had some idiot rip the thing from my head and throw it down the hall. How embarrassing is that? What does that do to you?

After all that heartbreak you experienced as a kid, how did you find the confidence to become a singer?

Thank god my parents gave me the support I needed. But anger was a great motivator, and I had more balls than brains. I wasn't going to let this stop me. So instead of hiding I went on to the biggest stages in the world. That's quite insane when you think about it.

In the late seventies you made four albums with the group Fandango, but your big break came in 1980 with a call from Ritchie Blackmore.

I was living in a studio apartment in New York City, with roaches crawling all around. The phone rang one day and it was Ritchie asking if I wanted to audition for Rainbow. I said: "Yeah! I need the gig. I don't want it, I *need* it!" So I went to Long Island where they were recording. We cracked open a six-pack of Heineken, then they threw me right in the room and said: "Here's a song we're working on called *I Surrender*…"

You had a great run with Rainbow, and then a few years with Yngwie Malmsteen. Then Blackmore brought you into Deep Purple after singer Ian Gillan was fired. Was that because Ritchie rated you so highly, or because he couldn't bear to work with Gillan again?

I think it's both. And I think Ritchie wanted to piss everybody off. At that point I'd been working with Foreigner. But then [original Foreigner singer] Lou Gramm came back. Then I got a call from Bad Company's people. And then I got the call from Deep Purple. It was unbelievable.

Long before you joined Rainbow, you were a Deep Purple fan. Did it feel surreal being in that band?

A dream came true. I always had this philosophy: be it, act like it, and it will happen. So I was in Deep Purple and it felt other-worldly, but I kind of took it in my stride. I'd been there before with Rainbow, filling big shoes, and it was the same with Purple.

So after all that history with Blackmore, how did you feel when he relaunched Rainbow in 2016 with a new singer, Ronnie Romero? Had you been expecting the call?

I was in touch with them way before, and if we'd put a Rainbow extravaganza together with the singers and players from the past it would have been enormous. But someone told Ritchie that I wanted a million dollars, which of course wasn't true, so in the end Ritchie did what he did.

Your new album, *Belly Of The Beast*, was made with Swedish producer and death-metal musician Peter Tägtgren, and it's surprisingly heavy stuff for you.

I was so tired of doing this AOR cookie-cutter bullshit. I needed to do something different. And when I had the heart attack, I had a revelation: You need purpose and meaning in your life. You need to dig deep – physically, professionally, creatively – to become the artist you truly are.

It has the feel of a concept album. Is there a central message in it?

Yeah: wake up, people! We've been sleeping too long. We are spiritual beings but we've lost our way. Look at the state of the world – how did we get here? And we're not here for ever, so make it count.

With the new album and the new image, do you feel that this is a new beginning for you?

This is a new era in every way. And I am lucky and blessed to have the opportunity to do this. **PE**

38 **JOE LYNN TURNER**
The Belly Of The Beast
MUSIC THEORIES RECORDINGS/MASCOT

With a CV that includes stints in Rainbow and Deep Purple, Joe Lynn Turner always had heavyweight prowess at his fingertips. With *Belly Of The Beast* he eschewed the fluffier AOR of his previous releases in favour of majestic hard rock and brooding metallic flavours. The opening title track is pure pummelling riffage, while *Tortured Soul* combines sombre grandeur with infectious industrial-edged riffs – you can hear producer Peter Tägtgren's experience with (Rammstein singer) Till Lindemann. At 71, Joe Lynn Turner looks and sounds like a new man. **PG**

Killer track: *Tortured Soul*

AGATA NIGROVSKAYA/PRESS

"I was so tired of doing this AOR cookie-cutter bullshit. I needed to do something different."

Megadeth

37 MONSTER TRUCK
Warriors BMG

For the best part of a decade, these no-bullshit Canadians have sustained a loyal following by sticking to the bearded, righteous chops that won them over in the first place. Still, after years of continuous touring and a bunch of life changes, they were due a refocus.

Warriors is the sound of Monster Truck doing just that, bringing to mind the heavy, bluesy fuzz and monstrous riffs of debut album *Furiosity* – plus extra hot sauce from the roosty warmth of *Country Livin'* and solid-gold bangers like *Love And Time* and *Golden Woman*. **PG**

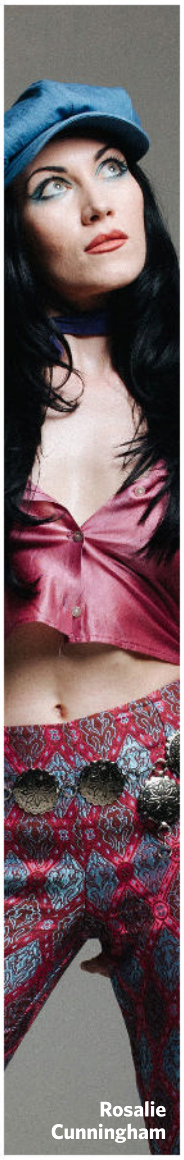
Killer track: *Golden Woman*

36 MEGADETH
The Sick, The Dying... And The Dead! UMC

Megadeth's best days are long behind them, right? Well… wrong, actually. The sixteenth album from the thrash-metal pioneers was also the highest-charting of their career across the world, entering at No.3 in the UK.

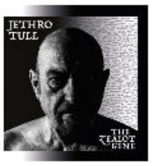
Even throat cancer was unable to stop frontman/band leader Dave Mustaine, whose latest Megadeth line-up is a little shorter in the tooth than him, although every bit as hungry and well-drilled. Now into his sixties, the chances of Mustaine mellowing with age would appear to be absolutely zero. **DL**

Killer track: *Life In Hell*



Rosalie Cunningham

35 JETHRO TULL
The Zealot Gene INSIDE OUT



A UK Top 10 hit, Jethro Tull's twenty-second studio record was their first since 2003's *The Jethro Tull Christmas Album* – and was well worth the wait.

With the *Bible* as his frame, an inspired Ian Anderson leads his band through caustic songs broaching sibling rivalry, toxic social media, drunken revellers and the horrors of Hiroshima. He even plays God at one point (type-casting?), on a literate, listenable album right up there among Tull's best. **GM**

Killer track: *Mine Is The Mountain*

34 GINGER WILDHEART & THE SINNERS
Ginger Wildheart & The Sinners WICKED COOL

The abrupt curtailing of The Wildhearts' creative rebirth was perhaps not that surprising, given their mercurial frontman's unpredictable ways. And perhaps we should also have expected the unexpected from this new band he'd had up his sleeve since 2019.

The punky intensity and high-octane rock textures of his alma mater are less in evidence here, but a love of southern and heartland rock, along with vintage Americana, shines through on 10 effusive tracks that might not be as wild of heart but whose soul resonates loud and clear. **JS**

Killer track: *Footprints In The Sand*

33 THE HU
Rumble Of Thunder BETTER NOISE

While The Hu's debut album *The Gereg* was all about global conquest, and propelled the Mongolian group into charts worldwide, *Rumble Of Thunder* is about consolidating those gains while expanding their sonic repertoire. Fist-pumping, galloping-horse folk metal is still present, but the band also explore more limber folk stylings, while *Mother Nature* feels like a Mongolian take on the soulful grunge of Temple Of The Dog. **RH**

Killer track: *Upright Destined Mongol*

32 TUK SMITH & THE RESTLESS HEARTS
Ballad Of A Misspent Youth MRG

Tuk has had his share of bad luck. When his former band Biters fell apart, he put together a solo group and landed a spot on the Def Leppard/Mötley Crüe tour, only for covid to intervene. Two years on he's back with this sparkling love letter to the 70s rock'n'roll he loves so much. *Girls On The East Side Of Town* is a joyful Thin Lizzy-esque romp. *Ain't For The Faint* burns with driving, hawk-eyed bite. But it's the ballad *Everybody Loves You When You're Dead* that proves he can deliver a poignant message, along with a blinding tune. **PG**

Killer track: *Everybody Loves You When You're Dead*

31 MUSE
Will Of The People WARNER

When Muse decided to base their ninth album on real-world events, they had plenty to work with. Described in these pages as "the most visceral condemnation of the global situation that Muse have yet conceived", *Will Of The People* finds them casting a thrilling shadow over the pandemic era. From the sassy-robot-army glam stomp of the title track, to the electro-punk fuzz of *We Are Fucking Fucked* and the brutal, groovy judder of *Won't Stand Down*, it capitalises on their organic rock *and* retro-futurist-cyberdude extremes (and all the nuances in between). **PG**

Killer track: *Won't Stand Down*

30 ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM
Two Piece Puzzle ESOTERIC ANTENNA

For her second solo album, vocalist/multi-instrumentalist/producer Cunningham further embraced a glorious gamut of 60s

MEGADETH: TRAVIS SHINN/PRESS; ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM: ROB BLACKHAM/PRESS

MUSE: NICK FANCHER/PRESS

MUSE

Matt Bellamy on how the explosive new Muse album was created – with inspiration coming from Iron Maiden and Rage Against The Machine.

Words: **Amit Sharma**

Matt Bellamy loves a heavy riff. Now more than ever. "I definitely think a bit more metal has crept in this time," he says of Muse's 2022 album *Will Of The People.*

He's always had it in him, as evidenced by early Muse bangers like *New Born* and *Stockholm Syndrome,* which helped make Muse one of the most successful alternative rock acts of the modern age. But with this new album the singer/guitarist is really going for it in terms of sheer sonic weight.

Will Of The People is a head-twisting celebration of heaviness. It's the sound of a group finding new ways to catch lightning in the bottle, and hard-wire galactic riffs into stadium-conquering anthems. Tracks such as *Kill Or Be Killed* and *Won't Stand Down* live up to the metallic defiance of their titles, while *You Make Me Feel Like It's Halloween* – despite being a synth-led throwback to the group's electro influences – features the most overtly shred-guitar run ever heard on a Muse album, a throwback to the 80s heyday of game-changing guitarists like Yngwie Malmsteen and Paul Gilbert.

There are some classic Muse traits on the new album's title track – the down-tuned single-note riffs, a generous helping of octave fuzz…

It's pretty much a traditional blues riff. That's one thing I learned from Rage Against The Machine. You can get away with straight blues riffs as long as you make the production unique. That's the key. Sometimes you'll sit down and play a riff and think: "Oh, that sounds very familiar, something from the sixties or seventies, like Hendrix" or whatever. I think we first learned this approach on *Supermassive Black Hole,* where we did everything we could to make a blues riff sound as futuristic and strange as possible. We took the same kind of production approach with *Will Of The People,* because it's mainly one main idea the whole way through and one of the simplest tracks we've done, at least on this album.

With its thrash metal feel, *Kill Or Be Killed* could be one of the heaviest tracks you've ever done.

For sure! I'm trying to think of where exactly it came from. I mean, metal has always been around for us. When we were growing up we were listening to bands like Iron Maiden. And though we connected more through Nirvana, Rage Against The Machine and the Smashing Pumpkins, we always had this love for eighties metal. Metallica were also a big one for us, but Iron Maiden were the British band and also felt a bit more punk rock in ways.

Especially on those early albums.

The song *Phantom Of The Opera* [from Iron Maiden's self-titled debut album, 1980] doesn't feel as bloated or overtly classical as other metal songs. There's still something quite angry and scary about it. That's why Maiden are a band we've always looked up to. That usage of the harmonic minor scale and the progressive approach to arrangements is something that we share, even if we never sounded like them and live in a different genre. We have a lot of respect for them as musicians, especially Steve Harris, who is one of the best bass players around. After that I got into bands like Deftones. I wouldn't call Rage Against The Machine metal necessarily, but they're one of my favourites. Someone played me some Gojira a while back and I really got into them. I'm sure some of that crept in."

There's a solo in *You Make Me Feel Like It's Halloween* that ends with what sounds like an Yngwie Malmsteen lick. Is he someone you've ever listened to?

Oh, brilliant! I haven't listened to him in a while, but Yngwie was one of those people I got into in the early nineties when I first started playing. Clearly back then, I thought there was a chance! After a while I realised I simply couldn't get to where he was, and sort of veered off towards more classical and flamenco guitar styles. Then I started listening to players like Hendrix and Cobain and felt: "You know what? I can do chaos. I can't do this unbelievable technical precision, but what I can do is create a mess." So I went down the road of noise, chaos and carnage…. and little elements of the other things stayed with me. And I think you're probably right, some of the fast-moving harmonic minor ideas will have come from players like that.

psychedelic and 70s progressive styles, as immediately evidenced by opener *Start With The Corners,* a strident epic that splices together Van der Graaf and Yes. Cunningham and partner Rosco Wilson then add touches of Nilsson, Curved Air and Fairport Convention to set this bold, colourful, humorous and mushroom-fuelled record apart from the modern-prog pack. **JK**

Killer track: *Duet*

29 ERIC GALES

Crown PROVOGUE

We've heard for years about how the gifted Eric Gales is 'the guitarist's guitarist'. But on *Crown,* his seventeenth album, he finally translates those virtuoso powers into hard-hitting, blues-rock brilliance. From the propulsive swagger of *Death Of Me* to *I Want My Crown*'s infectious, funky licks (featuring Joe Bonamassa) this is Gales's finest and most diverse record to date. *Too Close To The Fire*'s eye-watering guitar solo would even knock Hendrix for six. It's a coronation in all but name. **CL**

Killer Track: *Too Close To The Fire*

28 RAMMSTEIN

Zeit UNIVERSAL

Rejoice! The inimitable Germans return with more reasons to study their native tongue. *Zeit* captures Rammstein in reflective mood. The title track and *Schwarz* tie delicate piano textures with Till Lindemann's haunting croon. But don't worry, there's still room for riff-heavy, madcap musings on plastic surgery (*Zick Zack*) and mammaries (*Dicke Titten*). Much of it finds the band on autopilot, but that means stompy, metallic earworms that rarely fail to impress. A perfect blend of vision and familiarity. **CL**

Killer track: *Angst*

27 THE SHEEPDOGS

Outta Sight

WARNER MUSIC CANADA

Outta Sight, the Sheepdogs' seventh album didn't move the hirsute Canadian quintet much beyond its predecessor, but hey, that's them. A celebration of and a tribute to the lusty magnificence of the 70s, they're a band forever sealed in classic-rock amber, smooshing all your favourite bands together with apparent ease, enormous affection and no small amount of humour. It's more fun than a barrel of beavers, but the songwriting is world-class and there's not a moment where it sounds like pastiche. **FL**

Killer track: *Scarborough Street Fight*

Halestorm

26 HALESTORM
Back From The Dead ATLANTIC

Lzzy Hale's lockdown identity crisis was brutal – "So now I'm just Elizabeth Hale on the couch in her pyjamas for three days?" – but *Back From The Dead* was both her own fightback and the rallying cry we all needed. Even when writing for non-existent audiences, the Halestorm frontwoman has the stadiums in her mind's eye, and the seething title track, cruncher *Bombshell* and standout *The Steeple* announce that any remaining face masks can now be tossed onto the funeral pyre.

"I was very much writing in the now, but I had started going to therapy shortly before lockdown," Lzzy told us. "There were a lot of things I didn't like about myself. I found myself in bouts of depression, little anxiety attacks that I haven't had since I was a teenager. All that stuff started coming back, and I'm sure it leaked into the writing process." **HY**

Killer track: *The Steeple*

25 JOURNEY
Freedom BMG

Journey have been more soap opera than band in recent years, but their first album since 2011 found mainstays Neal Schon and Jonathan Cain putting aside their differences to reclaim their hard-rock crown. Killer anthems and creamy ballads mine the band's own glorious past just the right amount, guitarist Schon lights fireworks on *Together We Run*, while 'new' singer Arnel Pineda does an effective job of banishing the ghost of Steve Perry. *'Don't give up on us, baby,'* he sings on *Don't Give Up On Us*. We won't if you won't. **DE**

Killer track: *Together We Run*

TOP 5 COUNTRY ALBUMS

Chosen by **Rob Hughes**

1 CAITLIN ROSE
Cazimi NAMES

Nine years after her last studio album, *The Stand-In*, Caitlin Rose's belated, wonderful comeback has her detailing the effects of an existential crisis that almost derailed her career. Nashville-based Rose draws from country's storied past while imbuing her songs with a rockist edge and sharp modern sensibility, which is never less than captivating.

Killer track: *Getting It Right*

2 NIKKI LANE
Denim & Diamonds NEW WEST

3 RAY WYLIE HUBBARD
Co-Starring Too BIG MACHINE

4 THE DELINES
The Sea Drift DECOR

5 WILCO
Cruel Country DBPM

Eddie Vedder

24 EDDIE VEDDER
Earthling

SEATTLE SURF/REPUBLIC

Auditioned by Pearl Jam on the recommendation of former Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Jack Irons, Eddie Vedder shot from obscurity to global fame as Pearl Jam's debut *Ten* took off like a rocket.

Earthling finds Vedder taking a more definitive solo step (after several acoustic projects), buoyed by a vibrant band featuring Chilis drummer Chad Smith, and former Chilis guitarist Josh Klinghoffer. Vedder's unmistakable vocals combine elements of punk (*Good And Evil*), stadium-shaking rock (*Invincible*) and psychedelia (*Brother The Cloud*) into a cohesive whole. **RD**

Killer track: *Long Way*

23 REEF
Shoot Me Your Ace

RAGING SEA

If there's was a record this year with more out-and-out swagger than *Shoot Me Your Ace*, I'd like to hear it. Reef's sixth album sounds like the work of a band just hitting its stride. With Jesse Wood and former Duranie Andy Taylor (who also produced) cross-stitching guitar riffs over Jack Bessant's bumping bass parts, the platform is set for Gary Stringer's outlandish, rough-core vocal gymnastics. *'I wanna see just how far I can go,'* he bellows, like King Kong sizing up the Empire State Building. **DS**

Killer track: *Wolfman*

22 SAXON
Carpe Diem SILVER LINING MUSIC

Twenty-three studio albums into a career that began back in the late 70s, you'd expect Saxon to be flagging. Not at all. *Carpe Diem* (Latin for 'seize the day') delivers few surprises but a great many delights. We know what we want from Saxon, and they deliver it time after time. As our man Jason Arnopp said in his review: "As was the case with Motörhead, there's genuine pleasure to be had in knowing what to expect from salty sea dogs like these." **DL**

HALESTORM: JIMMY FONTAINE/PRESS; EDDIE VEDDER: DANNY CLINCH/PRESS

SAXON

The metal veterans' frontman Biff Byford on the year's best music, the side effects of the medicatiom he's taking, having a strong work ethic, and plans for a tour in 2023 and another album.

Interview: **Henry Yates**

Given that he wrote Saxon's latest album in a hospital bed following his heart attack of 2019, Biff Byford would surely agree with Keith Richards's old chestnut that 'it's good to be anywhere'. But to find *Carpe Diem* sitting pretty at No.22 in *Classic Rock*'s best albums of 2022, the 71-year-old singer considers, is further evidence of a band flourishing in their fifth decade.

***Carpe Diem* is Saxon's twenty-fourth album. It seems that you, and as a band, hold yourselves to high standards?**
Yeah, we do. I don't want to put anything out that means people can say: "Oh, they've lost it." I like to keep everybody on their toes. I'm pushing all the time. I read a few reviews and they were all brilliant, actually. For an older band it's easy to get a 'but' at the end. You know what I'm talking about: "Yeah, they're great, but…' This album, there were no 'but's.

As an older lyricist, do you look around you for inspiration more these days?
Yeah, I definitely write about more worldly things now. But the odd song about a motorcycle always works good too [laughs].

Are you fully restored now after your fairly recent heart problems?
Yeah, I'm bopping around on stage. I'm on medication, and it's hard to keep my weight under control. It's all over the place. Sometimes I'm quite thin, then sometimes I get a bit fatter. But I'm pretty fit. You'll have to come and see us and find out.

Saxon hit the road hard this year. Do you think people need the release valve of live music more than ever now?
Yeah, I think they do. In the eighties, when we broke onto the scene, things weren't good then, either; a lot of rioting and strikes going on with Margaret Thatcher. But when people are feeling it, they go out and see a band. The beauty of our show is that we don't charge an exorbitant price. Glastonbury went up seventy quid the other day, didn't it? Our prices are the same this year as they were last time. I think giving value for money is important at this particular point in time.

"If it's not broke, don't fix it. That's my mentality. We're already writing songs for the next album"

Biff Byford

With more than the usual shenanigans going on, did the state of British politics make you laugh or cry this year?
Both. We're all pinning our hopes on new prime minister Rishi Sunak now, so let's see if he can get the job done. I hope the economy and the Brexit thing get sorted out, because that made a massive impact on the music industry. Politicians need to start being sensible and working for the people, rather than working for themselves. They're not rock stars, are they? They're politicians. They should do their fucking job. So let's hope this guy does.

Have you learnt to do anything new this year? To cook, let's say, or play golf?
[Disgusted] Golf?! You're kidding.

Which was your favourite song, album or gig of the year?
I like the Amon Amarth stuff, but then again I co-wrote a song with them [*Saxons And Vikings*], so I'm probably biased. I like the Ghost album. I wanted to go and see Deep Purple and Blue Öyster Cult, but I came home from tour and the gig was the next night, so I was just too knackered.

Where does that work ethic of yours come from?
I'm working-class, mate. I've always had to work for money. I can't not write music. It's in my blood.

Of those we lost in 2022, whose death hit you hardest?
The Queen was sad. I like the history of the royal family. I'm not really enamoured with them all, but the Queen was cool. We lost a few people, didn't we? Some great actors, too. It's a circle of life thing. There's really no point worrying about it until it comes, is there?

Finally, do you have any New Year's resolutions you'll be making?
Nah. If it's not broke, don't fix it. That's my mentality. We're already writing songs for the next album and planning the *Seize The Day* world tour, starting in America maybe. We're on a roll. Keep motivated and keep the juices flowing, that's the secret.

Red Hot Chili Peppers

21 H.E.A.T.
Force Majeure EARMUSIC

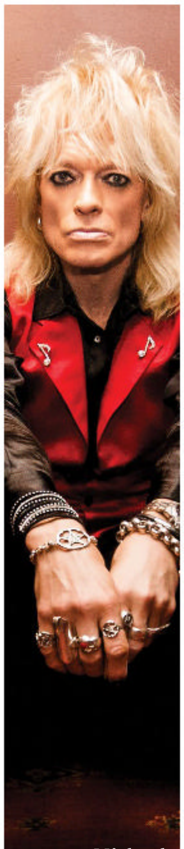
With long-time singer Erik Grönwall headed off to front Skid Row, H.e.a.t decided the only way forward was with their *first* singer. And after 12 years of soul-searching, recovering from illness and turning into a rock star through solo work and Queen tribute shows, Kenny Leckremo was ready to rejoin the band. *Force Majeure* shows what a positive reunion it's been, with *Top Gun*-ready standouts like *Harder To Breathe*, *Back To The Rhythm* and *Nationwide* screaming, synthing and riffing into our hearts. Turn it up and party like it's 1986 – like it was never *not* 1986. **PG**
Killer track: *Nationwide*

20 BIG BIG TRAIN
Welcome To The Planet
ENGLISH ELECTRIC

These beloved British proggers' latest album came along just six months on from 2021's acclaimed *Common Ground*, and songs such as the sumptious title track, by new vocalist-keyboard player Carly Bryant, helped create one of BBT's most uplifting albums to date; see also *Made Of Sunshine* and the brass-'n'-drums workout *Bats In The Belfry*. *Capitaline Venus* and *Oak And Stone* pulled at the heartstrings, made more poignant by the reality that this would be vocalist David Longdon's final BBT recording, following his untimely passing in November 2021. Beautiful, intimate yet soaring in a way that only BBT can really do, it's inevitably a bittersweet listen, but with an uplifting, proudly prog heart. As Longdon told us not long before he died: "Others are in denial, but we always embraced being a progressive rock band. It's given us a very loyal fan base." **JK**
Killer track: *Lanterna*

19 MICHAEL MONROE
I Live Too Fast To Die Young
SILVER LINING MUSIC

Michael Monroe continues to age disgracefully, punting out albums that retain all the fervour of old and singing with the livewire energy of a man whose chest is permanently attached to defibrillators. This monster energy surges throughout *I Live Too Fast To Die Young*, tempered by moments of tender reflection on *Derelict Palace* and *Antisocialite* and, on the haunting *Dearly Departed*, a grief most raw. More happily, Monroe now makes better albums than his heroes (Bators, Thunders) ever did. **FL**
Killer track: *Everybody's Nobody*


Michael Monroe

18 THUNDER
Dopamine BMG

Unexpectedly, *Dopamine*, Thunder's fourteenth studio album, was a double – although its 70 minutes of music might fit on one CD. More predictably, it comprises superior songs, 16 of them, wrung from the imagination of guitarist Luke Morley. There are no major departures, despite the huge riff heralding opener *The Western Sky*, although it includes not one but two great ballads – *Unravelling* and *Is Anybody There?* – both of which are bleak and empowering. Despite the cover artwork's brown colour scheme, *Dopamine* shines brightly. **NJ**
Killer track: *Dancing In The Sunshine*

17 THE CULT
Under The Midnight Sun
BLACK HILL

Eternal rock'n'roll shamen The Cult were never going to fall back into the 'elder statesmen' comfort zone a near-40-year career can bring, but in 2022 few would have expected them to deliver their finest album in decades. *Under The Midnight Sun* exudes the kind of dark majesty that comes with age and experience. Ian Astbury's voice wears the years with dignity, although it's Billy Duffy's restless, arcing guitar that defines *Outer Heaven*'s mystical swirl and the Zep-esque grandeur of *Knife Through Butterfly Heart*. Watch and learn, kids. **DE**
Killer track: *Outer Heaven*

16 RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
Unlimited Love WARNERS

Prodigal guitarist John Frusciante's return for his third stint in the Red Hot Chili Peppers did nothing if not open the creative floodgates. *Unlimited Love*, the first of two albums the Californian band released in 2022, was a left-field arena rock flex, drilling deep into the rich seam of melody they've been mining for the past two years but tempered with the slyly experimental edge this band rarely get respect for. Credit Frusciante for the latter: the protean six-stringer ensured that none of *Unlimited Love*'s 17 tracks sounded the same. **DE**
Key track: *Black Summer*

RHCP: SANDY KIM/PRESS

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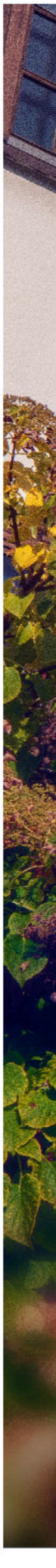
THE ULTIMATE REVIEW 2022



VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

Drawing from the icy beauty of their native Finland, with their latest album the sibling trio have written this year's most compelling reflection on our relationship with the natural world.

Interview: **Polly Glass**

While the world shut down in 2020, the Von Hertzen Brothers dispersed. Bassist and keyboard player Jonne, the youngest, remained in Helsinki, frontman/middle brother Mikko went to India (his second home for many years), and guitarist Kie disappeared into the Finnish archipelago with his canoe. Locked away with webs of rock, prog, folk, electronic and pop DNA between them, they wrote music.

Fast forward some months, and Mikko found himself alone at the family cabin in Raseborg, on the southern tip of Finland. As children the Von Hertzens spent long summers here playing in untamed pine and evergreen forests, spotting elk, birds and butterflies, picking mushrooms and berries and swimming in lakes, all with the chill of the Baltic sea in the background. What he found was a wake-up call. The sort that so many of us, all over the world, are finding harder to ignore. Lyrics started coming to him, which would ultimately tie up the strands the three siblings had worked on separately.

"Forests were cut down," he recalls. "Completely, completely cut down. I was walking around these places that used to be very familiar, and suddenly I come into a place and everything is gone. And it was such a moment for me; like, why do we have to do this? Is this the way we treat all the other species?"

Since the dawn of the noughties, the Von Hertzen Brothers have been described as 'hard to categorise'; pop stars in prog star clothing; arena rockers wrapped in clever sounds. It hasn't turned them into superstars, but it has afforded them freedom. Freedom to sound like themselves. Freedom to convey their dark, mysterious homeland in thoughtful layers of instrumentation – and, crucially, great songs.

Their latest album, *Red Alert In The Blue Forest,* is their biggest demonstration of all this. It came together in stages, from late 2020 into 2021: recording-studio stints in Sipoo, Helsinki, sessions on the island of Suomenlinna for gauzy, otherworldly standouts *Sodeskar* and *Anil*. At one point the brothers went back to the family cabin to record vocal harmonies, setting up a vocal booth in Jonne's bedroom.

The resulting album is a multi-layered love letter to their motherland that taps into global concerns. But it's a thoughtful take on a subject that can be so fraught with conflict and feeling. It's honest without being depressing, sad yet uplifting.

"My feeling is that it's not too late yet to start treating nature as it should be treated," Mikko says. "There are things we can do. The idea that nature is only there for humans to take from, for our own gain or whatever, it's very unfamiliar to us."

The brothers' close relationship with nature gleams through the album's elegiac textures and ethereal haze. It's there in the Zeppelin-esque folk of *The Promise*, the blissed-out orchestration of *Anil*, the starlit beats and electronics of *Northern Lights* and the acoustic cool of *Sodeskar* (named after the islet said to have inspired *Moomins* writer Tove Jansson).

The title *Blue Forest* comes from the phenomenon of 'the blue hour', the colour generated as the Nordic sun sets on the trees: "It's kind of like the green of the trees is turning to blue, before it dies out, before the colour dies off," Mikko explains.

In a moment of light relief, the trio's youthful adventures are captured in the chipper, sea shanty-esque *Pirates Of The Raseborgian*. "There's the *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, so we have the Raseborgian," Mikko says, grinning. "It's not even a word. We just made it up because we felt like, in some way, we want to remain as kids. We are getting older, we are getting cynical, but we are trying to keep that childlike enthusiasm and attitude towards music."

Heroes in Finland (where their albums routinely top the chart), the brothers have been able to take these sounds and images to a huge cross-section of listeners. On their most recent national tour they played in cosmopolitan cities and small seashore towns, large seated concert halls and noisy punk clubs, combining styles, sounds and even audiences in a way that very few rock bands manage.

"We can really tailor stuff according to the venue and the time of the day we are playing," Mikko says. "The concert halls are usually at seven o'clock in the evening, and the last club gig we played was at midnight. It's so different – the vibe, what they want to hear at that hour."

On some level it's all readying them for their dream gig, giving audiences the sort of soaring, lush performance they'd offer there – whether or not that gig actually happens. "I always felt like the brothers should play the Royal Albert Hall, at some point in our career," Mikko says, not arrogantly but not apologetically either. "So we're kind of preparing ourselves for a really cool concert."

For now the Von Hertzens enjoy a different kind of success. Operating on their own terms. As 2022 closes they're playing their final shows of the year and starting to write new music for the next record. Christmas family time at the cabin beckons, complete with gingerbread, cider, saunas and gazing up at the stars from the deck by the water. "You can see the Milky Way," Mikko enthuses. "It is really beautiful."

Since its release in March, *Red Alert In The Blue Forest* has inspired the Blue Forest campaign by the Finnish Natural Heritage Foundation (with whom the band already had loose ties), raising funds to buy and protect a huge forest in southern Finland. It's a beam of light in the icy melancholia of this music. A call to rethink our position in the world: as part of nature, not separate from it.

"I think we should think about death every day," Mikko concludes brightly. "But not in a way that it's like: 'Oh my god, I'm so depressed.' We should understand what it means, and what it means for Earth to have a tree cut down, for example. It's not like we have answers to everything. But we definitely have concerns, and we've tried to think of ways that we could do stuff differently. It's small, but it's worth doing."

RAMI MURSULA/PRESS

15 VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

Red Alert In The Blue Forest

DOINGBEINGMUSIC

Mortality, the ravages of time and the destruction of the planet; anxiety hung heavy over the Von Hertzen Brothers' eighth album. Yet the Finns managed to find beauty within impending catastrophe, embracing the beauty of what's left of nature and casting their minds back to an idyllic childhood. *Red Alert In The Blue Forest* was both organic and expansive, tackling heavy-duty topics with intelligence and grace – and, in the Floyd-on-steroids epic *Peace Patrol*, delivering one of the finest songs of their career in the process. **DE**

Killer track: *Peace Patrol*

“ We are getting older, we are getting cynical, but we are trying to keep that childlike enthusiasm and attitude towards music.”

Mikko Von Hertzen

DAVID MCCLISTER/PRESS

TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

Releasing a sprawling album as four separate releases was quite a bold move, but one that paid off. But then this is a band that, while influenced by music of the past, is looking at new ways of doing things.

Interview: **Rob Hughes**

This year the Florida 12-piece, headed by married duo Susan Tedeschi (lead vocals, guitar) and Derek Trucks (guitar), released scintillating epic *I Am The Moon* in four separate volumes. With an accompanying film for each, the album became an episodic rock'n'roll experience, informed by the same ancient Persian poem, *Layla & Majnun*, that had once inspired Eric Clapton's *Layla*. Then they hit the road, ending with triumphant shows across Europe. We caught up with Susan Tedeschi for a look back of what has been a good year for the band, and what lies ahead.

How was 2022 for you?
Very busy, but really fun. The band is really firing on all cylinders, we're getting tighter and tighter.

Has there been a highlight?
Coming over to Europe. It was wonderful to play in Ireland, because my grandfather's from there. I loved playing London too. I'm a mixture of Irish, English and Italian. And, honestly, I'm just happy to be alive. The world is in such an uproar that it's lovely to be back and doing what we love.

Was *I Am The Moon* intended from the start to be a four-volume concept piece?
No, it developed over time. The main writers in the band – Derek and myself, Mike [Mattison] and Gabe [Dixon] – wrote songs that were all part of the same theme. And we were thinking about the old days, when people made fabulous records that were thirty-five-to-forty minutes long: *Axis: Bold As Love*, or John Coltrane records, or blues records by Elmore James or Big Mama Thornton. The new songs fitted perfectly into four separate albums, so we decided to release them like episodes. We wanted people to digest the music, really get comfortable with it, and then look forward to the next one. The whole idea was to have something communal. That's when Alix Lambert came in, making these amazing films for each record.

How does the dynamic work between you and Derek when you're creating music?
It's like a relationship. It's up and down, give and take, sacrifice and passion. It's all of the emotions, honestly. Having a great day is lovely, but you wear your heart on your sleeve on a bad day and people can see it. At the same time, it makes people realise that we're human and, no matter what, we get through things. The music side of it has actually been quite easy. We just have a natural connection and flow, so when we're writing it's sort of effortless at times.

> **"I think we might continue the idea of making records with visuals."**
> Susan Tedeschi

On a wider level, this seems to be a good time for frontwomen in bands. What's your take on that?
I love that women are now really coming out and being more prominent. And I think it's great that women are finally getting more credit for being musicians and not just singers. That was one of the reasons I started playing guitar when I was younger. I wanted to be able to lead a band and for them to take me seriously.

What's Christmas going to be like in the Tedeschi Trucks household?
When we finally get home it'll be us with the kids in Jacksonville, Florida. Maybe we'll go out to our farm. Maybe I'll visit some of our family up in Massachusetts, so they can see snow. But it's usually pretty relaxed. I'm definitely a very domesticated mom: I do the cooking and sewing and cleaning, all that stuff, pay all the bills. Derek's really good with the business side of it. He talks to all the people I don't want to talk to, so it's a good hand-off.

Looking to the immediate future, where do you go after a project like *I Am The Moon*?
Good question! I've always wanted to do a country record and a gospel record. And Derek's always wanted to do more of a jazz or instrumental record, so in the future we're going to try to do some solo projects as well as this band. Actually, I'm hoping to do something with Harry Styles too. We're connecting with some of his management and there's talk about it, so maybe that will be really fun and exciting.

What's next for Tedeschi Trucks Band?
This band has such a very important and beautiful connection with each other. Writing-wise, we're always so inspired by different things. It can go in so many different directions that it's hard to predict. But I think we might continue the idea of making records with visuals and releasing them to the world at the same time. I think that would be a really cool tradition.

Slash featuring Myles Kennedy & The Conspirators

14 SLASH FEATURING MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS

4 GIBSON

With Myles Kennedy laid low by covid midway through sessions for this album, Slash felt a "dark cloud" over 4. Yet the album stands among the pick of the semi-solo years, packed with riffs both feral (the *Appetite*-worthy intro to *The River Is Rising*) and left-field (the Eastern neo-classicism of *Spirit Love*), not to mention the best canine-inspired anthem since *Black Dog* (*Fill My World*). In a year in which GN'R toured the hits, Slash is still a man in motion. **HY**

Killer track: *The River Is Rising*

13 MASSIVE WAGONS

Triggered! EARACHE

Hot as hell after last year's breakthrough UK No.9 *House Of Noise, Triggered!* sees frontman Baz Mills strafe his own childhood bullies while speaking to an entire generation whose mental health hangs in the balance. In the hands of a more po-faced band it could have come off as preachy, but Massive Wagons never neglect the tunes, and from the rabble-rousing *Fuck The Haters* to the new-found maturity of *Please Stay Calm*, this is therapy you can mosh to. **HY**

Killer track: *Please Stay Calm*

ANN WILSON: ALAMY; SLASH: AUSTIN NELSON/PRESS

TOP 5 AOR ALBUMS

Chosen by **Dave Ling**

1 GENERATION RADIO

Generation Radio FRONTIERS

As the line between country music and AOR becomes increasingly blurred, this sensational debut from Jason Scheff (Chicago), Deen Castronovo (Journey, Revolution Saints), and Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts comes highly recommended for lovers of each of those acts, and of melodic hard rock in general.

Killer Track: *Why Are You Calling Me Now?*

2 TREAT

The Endgame FRONTIERS

3 PERFECT PLAN

Brace For Impact FRONTIERS

4 DYNAZTY

The Final Event AFM

5 JOHN ELEFANTE

The Amazing Grace DEKO

Ann Wilson

12 ANN WILSON

Fierce Bliss SILVER LINING

The voice of Heart remains a thing of wonder. *Fierce Bliss,* Ann Wilson's third solo album, is also the best she has made outside of the mothership. This time there's more original material, with hard-rock power in *Greed* and *Black Wing*, and an emotional tour de force with *Angel's Blues*. She also nails two classic 70s songs: Queen's ballad *Love Of My Life* and Robin Trower's blues-rock colossus *Bridge Of Sighs*. At 73 she's still kicking ass. **PE**

Killer track: *Black Wing*

11 TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

I Am The Moon CRAFT RECORDINGS

Released across four months and eight sides of vinyl, *I Am The Moon* seemed to float into being. Inspired by the same Persian poet who introduced *Layla* to Derek And The Dominos, it's an album that covers similar territory to Clapton and his assorted love songs, although the technical brilliance on display is always delivered in the service of the song. It's an album without ego, just a dozen musicians on a shared path to transcendence, pushing each other forwards and ever higher. **FL**

Killer track: *Soul Sweet Song*

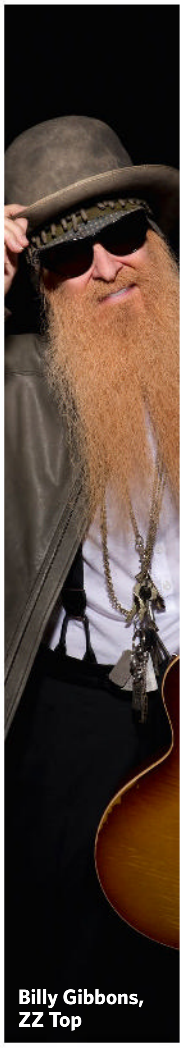
Alter Bridge

10 ZZ TOP
Raw: 'That Little Ol' Band From Texas' Original Soundtrack SHELTER/BMG

A greatest hits and live album rolled into one, *Raw* was something more than both of those things. According to Billy Gibbons, the trio were unaware they were being recorded as they performed an off-the-cuff run-through of ZZ Top favourites in an empty Texas music hall during the filming of the biopic *That Little Ol' Band From Texas*. With no overdubs or studio technology involved, what emerged was a joyful and authentic, one-take testament to 50-plus years of musical comradeship. Stripped to the bare essentials, songs ranging from the obscure *Brown Sugar* and *Certified Blues* to hits including *Gimme All Your Lovin'*, *Legs*, *La Grange* and *Tush* are revisited affectionately in their purest form. It turned out to be the last recording the three of them undertook before the sudden death of bassist/vocalist Dusty Hill in August 2021. Poignant and perfect. **DS**
Killer track: *Blue Jean Blues*

9 SKID ROW
The Gang's All Here EARMUSIC

Look, just forget all about the wasteland years when Skid Row used Johnny Solinger and ZP Theart in a vain attempt to fill the shoes of original lead singer Sebastian Bach. Two factors have served to reignite the creative flame of the New Jersey-based hard rockers. Firstly the arrival of former H.e.a.t frontman Erik Grönwall back in February as their new singer, and secondly the hiring of Grammy winner Nick Raskulinecz to produce *The Gang's All Here*. Capable of hitting notes that only canines can hear, Grönwall is a natural successor to the King Of Marmite, the Canadian dynamo Bach. And Raskulinecz, a fanboy of the first two Skid Row albums, went above and beyond the call of duty to help band mainstays 'Snake' Sabo, Rachel Bolan and Scotti Hill tap right back into the head-space of their first two albums *Skid Row* and *Slave To The Grind*. **DL**
Killer track: *The Gang's All Here*



Billy Gibbons, ZZ Top

TOP 5 BLUES ALBUMS
Chosen by **Henry Yates**

1 MARCUS KING
Young Blood
AMERICAN RECORDINGS/REPUBLIC

His bio doesn't lie, but the South Carolina guitarist is hard to swallow as a twenty-something; this second solo album has the fire of youth fused to the weather-blown wisdom that most bluesmen only achieve on their deathbed. Right now, nobody is writing, singing or playing better.
Killer Track: *Hard Working Man*

2 WALTER TROUT
Ride MASCOT/PROVOGUE

3 THE BAD DAY
The Bad Day
CRACKERJACK

4 JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR
Nobody's Fool KTBA

5 DAN PATLANSKY
Shelter Of Bones VIRGIN

8 ALTER BRIDGE
Pawns & Kings NAPALM

That there's an inevitability of excellence when Alter Bridge release a new album is testament to the band's lofty status among modern rock's elite. Not that they're ones to rest on their laurels. Seventh album *Pawns & Kings* saw the American band upping the beef in a big way. With its searing guitar work and cinematic quality, monstrous opener *This Is War* is easily one of the most dramatic songs in their history, while *Silver Tongue* is quintessential Alter Bridge: Herculean

BILLY GIBBONS: ROSS HALFIN; ALTER BRIDGE: CHUCK BRUECKMANN/PRESS

riffs, Myles Kennedy's supple vocals, and an irresistible chorus. *Sin After Sin* explodes with rugged, spiralling riffs. Kennedy and guitarist Mark Tremonti quite rightly take most of the plaudits for their sparkling songwriting partnership, but bassist Brian Marshall and drummer Scott Phillips are key to the AB's bluster – particularly on the lurching, outrageously catchy *Holiday*. Arena-fitting rock songs are rarely crafted with such immense flair and intellect. **CL**
Killer track: *This Is War*

7 OZZY OSBOURNE
Patient Number 9 EPIC

While some saw 2020's *Ordinary Man* as a swansong, Osbourne knew better. Teaming up again with producer/co-writer Andrew Watt, on this thirteenth album he rolls back some tough personal years and caterwauls like old times. Lyrically, *Patient Number 9* is Ozzy in excelsis – all death, decay, mental collapse and Hammer Horror cackles from the crypt – and the music can be pulverisingly heavy (try the brutal *Parasite* and *Evil Shuffle*). Yet you'll also find his best ballads in years (the string-draped *A Thousand Shades* evokes The Beatles waltzing to *All The Young Dudes*), while the embarrassment of axe heroes confirms that nobody is better-connected than the Prince Of Darkness – he even coaxed Eric Clapton out of the doldrums for a Cream-worthy wah-wah solo on *One Of Those Days*. "My time will come," Ozzy told us in Issue 300. But on this form, not yet. **HY**
Killer track: *One Of Those Days*

6 MARILLION
An Hour Before It's Dark
INTACT/EARMUSIC

Just as the themes of 2016's *F.E.A.R (Fuck Everyone And Run)*, written just before Brexit and Trump's rise, seemed to have become all the more relevant by the time it was released, this follow-up managed to hit just as resonant a topical chord. Steve Hogarth's lyrics stress the urgent need for self-sacrifice (*Be Hard On Yourself, Reprogram The Gene*) and our conflicting needs for both closeness and distance in the age of covid (summed up most memorably on *Murder Machines'* chorus as it admits: *'I put my arms around her, and I killed her with love'*), before epic closing track *Care* offsets the sense of immediate virus-inflicted danger against a slow-burning environmental apocalypse. Not that these sentiments would hit home quite so powerfully without the band's unfailing ability to paint dramatic sonic vistas and deliver stirring melodic swells. Dark, perhaps, but redemptive in equal measure. **JS**
Killer track: *Murder Machines*

Ozzy Osbourne

5 SCORPIONS
Rock Believer VERTIGO

Rock Believer isn't just the title of Scorpions' nineteenth studio album, it's also a mantra that has seen the veteran German band weather the ups and downs of a near-60-year career. Former Motörhead drummer Mikkey Dee proved to be an invaluable shot of adrenaline, winding the clocks back to the enormodome hard-rock anthems and heavy metal flirtations of *Blackout* and *Love At First Sting*. From *Gas In The Tank*'s engine-roar opening, Scorpions tear off the grid with all pistons firing, an inimitable mix of hip-thrusting rock'n'roll and unabashed cheese carrying *Roots In My Boots, Peacemaker* and the title track into classic-Scorpions world-conquering territory. Closer *When You Know (Where You Come From)* ticks the 'Massive Power Ballad' box nicely, shades of *Winds Of Change* drifting on the breeze in a reminder of why we were all (rock) believers in the first place. **RH**
Killer Track: *Peacemaker*

Neil Fallon, Clutch

4 CLUTCH
Sunrise On Slaughter Beach
WEATHERMAKER

The Maryland quartet returned with one of their most eclectic albums to date. Putting it together when the world was locked down by covid, the band wanted to create a concise, punchy record to lift listeners' spirits, with "every song a different flavour," frontman Neil Fallon has said. British producer Tom Dalgety took the controls, and theremin and vibraphone made their way into the mix, with background influences from the band's late-night listening vocabulary of classical music, prog, hip-hop and jazz. However, the album retains its essential Clutch-ness: enormous stoner riffs, gloriously funky grooves and biting, incisive lyricism are all in plentiful supply. Touching, as ever, on the territories of Motörhead, AC/DC and ZZ Top, Clutch still inhabit their own signature space where rock's imagination can get a little psychedelic. **JK**
Killer Track: *We Strive For Excellence*

NEIL FALLON: DAN WINTERS/PRESS: OZZY OSBOURNE: ROSS HALFIN

PORCUPINE TREE

Still bathing in the glow of the comeback that most people thought would never happen, Steven Wilson talks arena shows, the power of band T-shirts, and Harry Potter Christmases.

Interview: **Polly Glass**

When Porcupine Tree withdrew back in 2010, the mood was low. Today, as they tour *Closure/Continuation* – one of 2022's most successful comebacks (No.2 in the UK album chart) – it couldn't be more different.

"It's been a lot of fun," Steven Wilson says sitting in his hotel in Paris, reflecting on a year in which he has also published a book and completed his next solo album. "It's such a different feeling to the way it ended. We get on really well. There isn't that same pressure, because we have no commitment to doing anything beyond this. There's a lightness that comes with just doing something for fun. Every show feels special."

Question marks still hover over Porcupine Tree's future – although they have just confirmed a show for June 2023 at Manchester's Castlefield Bowl – but for now let's look at their past 12 months.

The anticipation for this reunion has been huge. Have you received any interesting gifts or messages from fans?

I'm a little bit insulated from all that stuff. I don't go on social media, I don't read comments. I haven't done any after-show things on this tour, because if I get ill, or any of us get ill, then the whole tour gets cancelled. That would be an absolute disaster financially and otherwise. So we've been very careful. But I hear people are really enjoying it, and I see the smiles on the faces of the people in the front rows, so to me that's all I need.

Are you seeing Steven Wilson T-shirts in the audiences as well as Porcupine Tree ones?

Half the front row in Poland a couple of nights ago were wearing my T-shirts, and Gavin [Harrison, drummer] has been out with Crimson so we've seen a lot of King Crimson shirts. I always say one of the best ways to understand where you fit in is to look at the T-shirts on people that come to your shows, and we've seen such an eclectic mixture. Obviously there's people with very metal T-shirts, and even more extreme black metal, but then a lot of Radiohead, Nick Cave, Depeche Mode and Sigur Ros. That's really gratifying to me, because those are all artists I think of as difficult to categorise. So that's been really thrilling.

***Closure/Continuation* was a collaborative effort between you, Richard Barbieri and Gavin. Did the same spirit apply to plans for these shows?**

Very much so. The whole repertoire, the production, the look of it, everything. Right from the beginning, we were all firmly committed to the idea that we wanted to play all of the new record. That's important to us. We want to present this as a tour based around a new record, not a trawl through the back catalogue for nostalgic reasons. So once we decided that we wanted to play the new material, it's a question of what would sit comfortably alongside it. And also what material could we play that people weren't expecting to hear. So we're playing at least one song in the tour which we never played back in the day. That's what's really thrilling to the hard-core fan, who hasn't just come along to hear the hits. We don't have any hits anyway, so that doesn't apply [laughs].

It's the band's first time headlining arenas. Has it given you the bug for playing shows on that scale?

It's wonderful to walk out on stage in front of seven or eight thousand people, and they've all come there just to see you. That's an incredible, incredible feeling. But I'm under no delusion that part of that is because of the novelty of the band coming back after such a long time. I think a lot of the excitement has been because people don't know if it's the last chance they'll have to see us play live as a band. But there's not the same intimacy you have in small venues. I think this tour has been about making the event as spectacular and memorable as possible, but the subtleties are less easy to get hold of in that context. And subtleties are important to me.

This year you also published your first book, *Limited Edition Of One*. How did you find the experience of publishing and promoting something so personal?

I understand how music proliferates, how people share, experience and discover music. With a book it's less tangible. I'm not quite sure who read it. And with a book it might take someone months to get to the end and formulate an opinion. So the process of feedback is less tangible to me. I'm happy that it kind of stands apart from most rock memoirs. I think it was well written. I like to think it took some unexpected turns. But time will tell.

You've already just about completed your next solo album, *The Harmony Codex*.

It's a return to more conceptual music; it's conceived as a 64-minute musical journey. And there's nothing on there particularly pop- or radio-friendly, as with the last couple of records. But it's keeping a lot of the musical vocabulary that I've been exploring these last few years – more electronic sounds. It is more ambitious. It's a piece of storytelling.

What new music by other artists impressed you this year?

The Smile record [*A Light For Attracting Attention*]. I absolutely adore it. It's a Radiohead album by any other standard, isn't it? It's a great record by Johnny [Greenwood] and Thom [Yorke]. Definitely my favourite record of the year.

Finally, what will Christmas be like in the Wilson house?

That's the first creative task when I get back from tour . Not to finish my record, but to finish planning Christmas for the children. My stepdaughters are eleven and nine, and they love Christmas. Last year we had a *Harry Potter*-themed Christmas. It's one of the things about having kids. You're creating memories that will carry through the rest of their lives. So we will have a very themed Christmas.

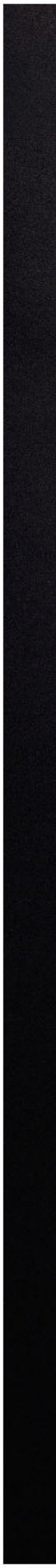
---

3 PORCUPINE TREE
Closure/Continuation

MUSIC FOR NATIONS

Some had probably given up hope of Steven Wilson's most revered vehicle ever being dusted off again, given his diverse and prolific solo output and tireless work as 5.1 surround-sound remixer to the stars. But just when we'd consigned them to the 'Permanent Hiatus' file, he rehabilitates Porcupine Tree with this vibrant record, their first studio album for nearly 13 years. Fans of the feistier metallic riffing found punctuating PT's earlier albums might find less to get their teeth into on *Closure/Continuation*, but the beguilingly unpredictable prog-informed patterns of Wilson's songwriting offer plenty of layers to unpeel. And prog drumming demi-god Gavin Harrison weaves supremely gnarly rhythmic labyrinths around the hyperactive bass and splenetic guitar excursions of tracks such as *Harridan* and *Chimera's Wreck*, either side of rich melodic strokes and cinematic soundscapes created on *Dignity* and *Of The New Day*. A return worth waiting for. **JS**

Killer track: *Harridan*



ALEX LAKE/PRESS

“There’s a lightness that comes with just doing something for fun. Every show feels special.”

Steven Wilson

GHOST

Tobias Forge on latest album *Impera*, dicovering TikTok and being viral on it, the backlash from that, the naming of his Nameless Ghouls, and bands he would like to have played guitar with.

Interview: **Polly Glass** Portrait: **Travis Shinn**

Armed with a gleefully luxurious new rock record – and a flame-spurting, cathedral-decked stage show to match – Ghost were one of 2022's juiciest, sparkliest prospects. *Impera* was built for the arenas they headlined, conveying Tobias Forge's internal web of doomy metal, enormous riffs and bombastic singalongs to delighted audiences. On top of that, they became TikTok stars (after a user posted a *Stranger Things*-themed video accompanied by live Ghost favourite *Mary On A Cross*). Next year they go back on tour, including an appearance at Download Festival in June.

What stands out in your memories of 2022?
Going back to touring was a fantastic feeling. In the beginning it felt almost unreal; still with a bit of restriction, which was kind of unintuitive, but the last tour we did, in August/September, was as good as normal. We released the record when we said we would, we managed to back it up with seventy shows. We cancelled one show in total. That's a good result.

***Impera* has dark, historically rooted themes, but it's also music that makes the listener feel so many things – joy, aggression, excitement, sorrow… After such a turbulent couple of years there's something cathartic about that.**
I am very happy about how the record came out, and that it seems to be well-received among our fans. That's a tremendous feeling. I feel like I managed to do a lot of things I set out to do. We're gonna continue next year, we still have a lot of things to do. But right now we're just recharging a little.

***Kaisarion* has been a hit live. For a song about the brutal murder of a female Roman philosopher, it really gets the party going.**
Yeah, I'm still surprised that with a song that does what it does – and was so well received and opened up the shows – there's never been talk about turning it into a single. Which I don't understand. But at the end of the day it's a label decision, and people around that decide which ones will, quote-unquote, 'work best'. And I've realised that I'm not really capable of choosing. I remember *Mary On A Cross* was a B-side.

It's weird how that happens with some songs.
Yeah, I must say I feel very optimistic with regards to how that song is taking a life on its own. Even though it was technically a B-side on a fun additional thing [2019's *Seven Inches Of Satanic Panic*] – it was not our main single from a new album – we have always played it ever since it came out, on every show. Maybe a few exceptions, but I've always pushed that song as something that I felt very good about.

On that subject, you're viral on TikTok now. What is it about that platform that appeals?
I hardly knew what it was until two months ago! I have two almost fourteen-year-old kids, so of course I'd heard the phenomenon mentioned. It's an insanely big thing among kids and teenagers. What happens is they create these short snippets, funny, sad or emotional clips, to which they often tag some sort of music or sound. And if you are a creator of sound or music, you might be tagged on to a clip that might go 'viral'. That way you hit a lot more people that you might never entertain, you know, aiming your guns at. So it's a bit of a crap-shoot as well. We are not a big mainstream act, so obviously there's going to be a mixed bag of reactions. Because people in general are kind of strange to a lot of these aesthetics of rock, and especially the darker aspects of it.

It has brought the band more attention.
But if all that attention is a good or a bad thing, we do not know yet. There have been people who might have come on to the track, and as soon as they see what the band is about – or what they *perceive* the band to be about – there's backlash, because it's like: "Oh my, God fearing hater!" "I don't like it!" "This is communist bullshit!" So there are two sides of the coin. But it's a great bonus if we can get new people, especially kids, into liking rock music or other things, or if it makes them feel in any way better-informed, if you will.

Do you think TikTok will be a bigger deal for musicians in the future?
I don't know. I think when you're a musician, and you're making records, you need to have a certain strategic mind. But your job at the end of the day is making records and playing live. That is the heart of the matter. If you sit around waiting for a viral thing to happen, you can wait a long fucking time.

Back in May, the identities of the Nameless Ghouls were confirmed on social media. How do you feel about them not being strictly nameless any more?
Well, they haven't really been for quite some time. So for me it was not an overnight sensation. And as long as it doesn't in any way interfere with what we are doing, there's no desire that I have for people not to feel proud or happy about what they're doing.

You've lamented not being able to play more guitar. If you could be the guitarist for a day in *any* band, which would it be?
Good question. There's several bands. I would have loved to be what Mick Taylor was in 1969, coming into the Rolling Stones at their best era – but I would have stayed around! That would have been a great experience. Very fun music to play. Definitely within the limits of what I can play really well. I spent a lot of time as a kid learning how to play guitar. Otherwise I would love to play in the Red Hot Chilli Peppers; I love what John Frusciante does.

Def Leppard might be a good fit too. Joe Elliott spoke very highly of *Impera* when it came out.
That would have also been really cool. Also a fantastic band. In an alternative reality, in an alternative life, I would have wanted to do a lot of other things. But I did hear that [that Joe said those things], and it was very heartwarming, of course. A very big honour.

---

2 GHOST
Impera LOMA VISTA

Ghost's fifth album was the point where be-mitred mastermind Tobias Forge opened up his Satanic bishop's robes and showed his class. The outfits said "diabolical ritual sacrifice", but the music screamed "blockbusting arena rock anthems". *Impera* proved that Forge knows what most bands have forgotten: everyone loves a good chorus. If they're hitched to an esoteric concept drawing parallels between ancient empires and today's head-spinning political travails, even better – opener *Kaisarion* is the sound of the fall of Rome as scored by Poison. Forge cited Def Leppard in their 80s pomp as a key influence, and it shows – every backing vocal stacked to the heavens, every drumbeat booming like thunder. Ghost also still played to the Beelzebubian gallery when necessary – the creeping *Call Me Little Sunshine* offered shits 'n' giggles for spooky kids everywhere. But ultimately *Impera* beat with a hair-metal heart – and thank Satan for that. **DE**
Killer track: *Kaisarion*

“It’s a great bonus if we can get new people, especially kids, into liking rock music.”

Tobias Forge

2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

1

DEF LEPPARD

Diamond Star Halos

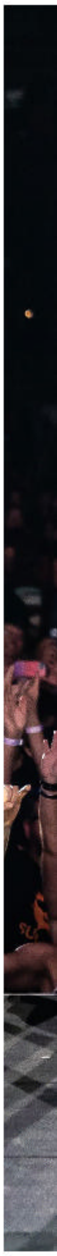
BLUDGEON RIFFOLA

The best rock album of 2022 is also the best Def Leppard album since 1992. They've made other strong records in the 30 years since *Adrenalize*, but with *Diamond Star Halos* they're thinking big, and also thinking outside the box.

Their career is built on rock anthems, and this one is front-loaded with three bangers: *Take What You Want, Kick* and *Fire it Up*. But there's a more experimental approach evident in three other standout tracks: *This Guitar*, a beautiful country-flavoured song, co-starring singer Alison Krauss; *Goodbye For Good This Time*, a 70s-style, strings-laden epic featuring former Bowie pianist Mike Garson; and the dramatic finale *From Here To Eternity*, described by singer Joe Elliott as "our murder ballad".

Diamond Star Halos is a truly great Def Leppard album. And they've already started on the next one. **PE**

Killer track: *From Here To Eternity*



This year, having played what Joe Elliott says was the biggest tour of their career so far, scooping *CR*'s Best Album Of 2022 was the cherry on the cake – and they deserved it.

Interview: **Paul Elliott** Photos: **Kevin Nixon**

Def Leppard celebrated their 45th anniversary in 2022 with the release of a brilliant new album, *Diamond Star Halos*, followed by The Stadium Tour in the US, on which they co-headlined with Mötley Crüe. For Leppard singer Joe Elliott, another highlight was singing the band's classic anthem *Photograph* with pop superstar Miley Cyrus, backed by two ex-members of Nirvana on guitar.

For Def Leppard 2022 was, as Frank Sinatra once sang, a very good year.

That would be an understatement. We were able to promote a new record by touring in stadiums, which is pretty unusual – unless you're U2.

***Diamond Star Halos* has been chosen as *Classic Rock*'s album of the year.**

Well, we're not the kind of band to buy a round of drinks when we get a good review or hang ourselves if we get a bad review, but it's always nice to be appreciated. And I genuinely think this is one of the best records we've ever done. Does it compete with *Hysteria?* Of course it doesn't – that's in everyone's DNA forever. But I think it's great for a band that's been around for as long as we have to deliver something extraordinary, where we went off on a tangent musically. The reference points went from Elton John to *Led Zeppelin III* to glam rock. We were embracing everything that made us want to be in band when we were kids, and that's what gives this record more of a seventies twist.

One of the best songs on the album is *This Guitar*, your country-rock duet with Alison Krauss.

I did the vocal for that song on this very laptop that I'm talking to you on. I did all my demo vocals on it. Some I re-recorded, but the one for *This Guitar* sounded great as it was, so that's what Alison sang to. And that really sums up the spirit of this record. Because we were recording remotely, we were using technology to the nth degree, but on a more organic level, if something was right, even if it was lo-fi, it got left on.

> **"The reference points went from Elton John to *Led Zeppelin III* to glam rock."**
>
> **Joe Elliott**

***Take What You Want*, the opening track, was also the song you opened with on The Stadium Tour. Was that an important statement to make?**

Oh yeah. It was a mission statement, our way of saying this is not a victory lap. Doing the opening number, your adrenalin is off the charts. It's magic. You have to stand where I stand to really feel what that's like. So we had the crowd lit up, it's a 'Hi, we're back!' moment, and it's a new song. That was pretty special. At the start of the tour we were doing four new songs, but we realised that was one too many. You live and learn. Three in ninety minutes is fine. Stadium shows are not open-mic nights. Stadiums are like churches – you go there to celebrate. So you play

it like a Rolling Stones or McCartney set. You get into the home straight and it's all hits – bang, bang, bang! And that's why this tour was so successful, because it was like a human jukebox. Joan Jett is a legend – a Runaway! She's got a great catalogue. Then out come Poison, and you know what [singer] Bret Michaels is like – this manic circus ringleader, whipping everyone into a frenzy. And then you've got us and Mötley, whoever went on first. And sometimes there was an argument that going on third was better, because the audience wasn't as tired!

Did you all hang out together off stage?
Not much. The safest way for us to keep that show on the road was just to avoid human beings as best we could. I caught covid at home before the tour. It's still out there. So all of us in Leppard travelled separately, which is the smartest decision we made. I didn't stay in hotels. I lived on the bus, just me and Dale, my driver, in total isolation. That's the price of doing business in 2022. If we cancel a stadium show in Arlington, Texas at four in the afternoon, people will have travelled hundreds of miles and spent hundreds of dollars to get there. So we avoided contact, we tested every day, and it worked. We didn't lose one gig.

So this tour wasn't one long rock'n'roll party, like it would have been the eighties?
You know, we act like children on stage but we're actually quite responsible people when we need to be. The one guy I hung out with a lot was Nikki [Sixx, Crüe bassist]. One night in Denver we went for sushi and talked about everything but music. It was funny, we didn't realise Tommy [Lee, Crüe drummer] was in the same restaurant until we could hear him! He's quite loud, you see. I asked Nikki what he was going to do when we had a break in the tour and he said: "I'm going fishing." Now there's a phrase I never thought I'd hear from the mouth of Nikki Sixx! But he was the only one I spent much time with. We know the guys from Poison really well, but I never saw Bobby Dall [bassist] throughout the whole tour. And the few times I saw Joan, we were always going in different directions between the dressing rooms and the stage on these golf carts, so we'd high-five as we passed.

Back with a double bang: Best Album Of 2022 winners Def Leppard on their huge and hugely successful The Stadium Tour this year.

Anything else to report from the tour – any *Spinal Tap*-style comedy moments?
Nothing too crazy. Of course, Tommy broke his ribs and was in and out for the first couple of weeks. The only problem for us was when Phil [Collen, guitarist] broke his hand doing a Pete Townshend windmill, so for the last two weeks he had two fingers taped together – luckily on his pick hand, so it didn't affect his playing, although it was painful. The big thing for me was I didn't lose my voice, or face-plant on stage. Because everything is on YouTube now, you're always aware that you've got to be at the top of your game. Here's what happens if you're a singer: if you screw up, everybody knows about it, but if you do a good job nobody knows about it. The only time anybody puts anything online ▷

"Let's get rocked!" Joe Elliott on The Stadium Tour.

is when you're shit. And I managed to avoid that, so for me that's a raging success!

Shortly after The Stadium Tour ended, you, Phil Collen and bassist Rick Savage performed at the Taylor Hawkins tribute concert in LA, where you played two of your classic songs, *Photograph* and *Rock Of Ages*, with members of the Foo Fighters plus Weezer's drummer Patrick Wilson. You even had Miley Cyrus singing with you on *Photograph*.
It was an amazing honour to do that gig for Taylor. Rick [Allen, Leppard drummer] was home, and Vivian [Campbell, guitarist] was doing his Last In Line stuff, so the three of us represented the band, and it was great fun to have this cross-pollination of bands that were supposed to not like each other. These people said they hated us because they had to back in 1992. But really they all loved the stuff we did on *Pyromania* and *High 'N' Dry*. And it was so great to see the smiles on the faces of Dave Grohl and Pat Smear in the guitar solo section of *Rock Of Ages* when they were playing a Nirvana lick to see if their mates in Soundgarden and Rage Against The Machine would notice. Miley Cyrus was very cool, too. She'd leaked that voicemail from Taylor Hawkins when he'd said: "I'm listening to *Photograph* by Def Leppard. You could fucking kill this song!" Which is why she wanted to sing it with us."

Was that a rather surreal experience?
Totally! Us and the Foos and Weezer doing Leppard songs with Miley Cyrus! In a parallel universe you'd say that would never happen. But it did because Taylor brought so many people together. And there was a great vibe backstage that night. I hadn't seen Lars Ulrich in thirty years and he was on great form, just lovable! And you had Tommy and Nikki and Joan all there, so it was like the tour was still on. It was a love-fest.

Away from your tour, did you see any good gigs this year?
Roxy Music were fantastic at the LA Forum. It was a US set-list, so we didn't get *Virginia Plain* or *Street Life*, but we did get *The Bogus Man* and *In Every Dream Home A Heartache*, which kind of confused all those Americans who were all waiting for *Avalon*.

> **"We've just done the biggest tour that we've ever done... That's a marvellous feeling."**
> Joe Elliott

And I bumped into my buddy John Taylor from Duran Duran. I also saw Beck there, whose dad David Campbell did the string arrangement on [Leppard's] *When Love And Hate Collide*. Small world, isn't it?

What for you is the best album of 2022?
There's a few: Eddie Vedder's *Earthling*, The White Lies [*As I Try Not To Fall Apart*], the Von Hertzen Brothers [*Red Alert In The Blue Forest*]… and – shock, horror! – I like the Jethro Tull album [*The Zealot Gene*]. But the one that rocks harder than anything else I've heard this year is Demi Lovato's album *Holy Fvck*. The riffs are fantastic and her singing is off the fucking charts!

Have there been any momentous events in your personal life this year?
I haven't had a personal life this year! I've been away from home for most of it. A momentous event would be the kids actually giving a shit when I dial in on FaceTime, instead of just staring at their iPads and saying "Hi dad!" as they carry on watching *Encanto* or *Sing 2*, whatever the fuck it is.

How will you be celebrating New Year's Eve?
Same as last New Year. We'll have a party at my house in Dublin with [Leppard producer] Ronan McHugh and his clan, getting up to no good till two in the morning. And there's a lot to celebrate. We've just done the biggest tour that we've ever done. I'm not gonna say the biggest that we'll ever do, because it's onwards and upwards from here. Forty-five years into our career, that's a marvellous feeling.

And there's more to come from Def Leppard in 2023.
We've got the beginnings of the next album percolating away on the back burner. There's another thing we've been working on that will be revealed soon. And in the summer we're bringing The Stadium Tour to the UK – us and Mötley and a couple of other bands we're talking to now. It's going to be great, like a mini-Donington or an Ozzfest, a gigantic show that's like a fucking cup final. Scoring a winning goal in the ninety-sixth minute at Wembley, that's what Def Leppard is all about.

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2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

THE RESURRECTION SHUFFLE

This year's highly rated comeback album *The Gang's All Here* saw a definitive return to form for **Skid Row** with new singer Erik Grönwall – their sixth lead vocalist in the band's history.

Words: **Dave Ling**

Following Skid Row's lighter-waving version of their power ballad *I Remember You*, their new frontman Erik Grönwall soaks up the adulation, lets the applause fade, and then gestures to the balcony of London's Forum. Grönwall – who first found fame singing Skid Row's *18 And Life* on *Swedish Idol* – informs the packed audience how three years ago, after performing there with his previous band, H.e.a.t, he was sitting up in the gallery of this venue watching headliners Skid Row and fantasising over some day joining the New Jersey hard rockers. "I just want to say, dreams do come true, man!" he announces with a massive grin.

What an unlikely journey it's been. The day after that Forum show, during *Classic Rock*'s meeting with Erik and his new bandmates, Grönwall reveals that not only did he not meet the members of Skid Row on that fateful night back in 2019, but they *still* hadn't met in the flesh – even after becoming their frontman – when he began recording his parts for *The Gang's All Here*, the album that introduced him to the group's fans.

"In my time with H.e.a.t we decided that when we opened for other bands we would do our part of the show and then party elsewhere," he says, smiling. "So no, I didn't meet the guys until four days before my first performance with them."

Growing up in Knivsta, a small town 30 miles outside of Stockholm, Grönwall had no opportunity to see Skid Row live during their MTV-enhanced heyday. But he was deeply moved by their first two, multi-platinum-selling releases: *Skid Row* and *Slave To The Grind*.

"I had a high-school band that played Skid Row covers," he explains. "It was singing those songs that taught me to hit the really high notes. For the longest time my karaoke song was *18 And Life*, long before I did it on *Swedish Idol*."

"The way that this whole thing came together is crazy but it's serendipitous," states bass player Rachel Bolan. "It's just too good to be true. When we reached out to Erik, there was no Plan B. It was either this or we'd be sitting at home for an awful long time."

Skid Row had begun recording the album with their previous singer of eight years standing, former DragonForce frontman ZP Theart, before realising it just wasn't working out. They offered Grönwall the gig after he added his vocals to a handful of tracks for the album, sent via the internet.

Although Grönwall was a free agent at the time, having left H.e.a.t in late 2020 after four albums, he was extremely ill, battling acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, a type of cancer that attacks white blood cells.

"I was diagnosed in March of last year and had a transplant in August, and five months later I was on stage with Skid Row," he marvels. "Back in January I was so exhausted that I couldn't sing an entire song. But gradually my strength returned and the doctors gave me permission to give it a try."

"It's official – Skid Row cures cancer," Sabo says, laughing.

Joking aside, these songs are pretty pointless without the stratospheric delivery by Sebastian Bach on their original studio versions. No disrespect to ZP, to the late Johnny Solinger or former TNT frontman Tony Harnell who had a short spell in Skid Row in 2015, but they have now regained the explosiveness that was lacking for quite a while.

> **"When we reached out to Erik, there was no Plan B."**
>
> **Rachel Bolan**

"That's completely true, and it's why he [Grönwall] is here in the band," Bolan acknowledges. "When we were on tour with H.e.a.t we were glued to the dressing room door, listening to Erik sing on stage. When the time came to make a change, he was the guy."

Grönwall: "Because I love those first two albums, when I heard the new songs, I knew right away what I wanted to do with them. It was my chance to give something back."

Such is Grönwall's importance to Skid Row that when Bolan introduced him in London he described him as "the greatest change we ever made". It's quite a statement.

"Down the years we've made a lot of changes – band members, even stylistic ones… y'know, whatever," Bolan says, "but this one has brought us back to where we are working like Skid Row again. Everything has fallen back into place. Erik was the missing piece."

Skid Row are thrilled by the overwhelmingly positive response to *The Gang's All Here*, which *Classic Rock* said was "a truly remarkable comeback". Inspired by its Grammy-winning producer Nick Raskulinecz to channel the spirit of those early records, the quintet's sixth full-length record is something of a watershed moment in their 36-year history.

"Nick was a fan of ours from even before he became a producer, and he wanted to make his favourite Skid Row record," Bolan explains. "When we first met Nick he told us he wanted ▷

Skid Row: (l to r) Rob Hammersmith, Scotti Hill, Erik Grönwall, Rachel Bolan, Dave 'Snake' Sabo.

JENNY RISHER/PRESS

Slaves to the grind: the new, improved Skid Row will be back on tour in 2023.

to produce the most kick-ass Skid Row record there's ever been. And you know, what we've accomplished in a relatively short time frame is pretty unbelievable. It's a really good feeling for guys as long in the tooth as we are."

Sabo admits that teaming up with Raskulinecz, who over the years has established something of a reputation for helping bands such as Rush and Alice In Chains to revisit their pasts without selling them down the river, was a challenge at first.

"Nick took us out of our comfort zone, and when we began to let down our guard it really worked," he says. "In the studio he would throw a curve-ball, saying: 'Okay, I really like that part of the song, but for the next one try coming up with something like what you wrote for the second verse of *Big Guns* [from the band's self-titled debut]. It really worked. He reintroduced us to the original essence of Skid Row."

Despite the cultural differences due to their nationalities, Grönwall has had little difficulty tapping in to Skid Row's sense of humour. Sabo tells the story of meeting him at JFK airport in New York for the first time, immediately prior to their residency with the Scorpions.

"Right off the bat we started laughing at the stupidest shit; it was very, very strange," the guitarist recalls. "We almost felt like long-lost brothers that hadn't seen each other in decades. Rachel was already in Vegas so I called him and said: 'Dude, we've got a big problem. This guy's a dick. He's completely egotistical and doesn't care about the band at all. It ain't gonna work.' Rachel replied: 'Oh no, you've gotta be kidding.' And then he heard Erik laughing in the background and realised that we were fucking with him."

What a brilliant wind-up!

"Yeah," Bolan says, chuckling. "I think I hung up on him. Bear in mind that when Snake met him for that first time in New York, Erik had already sung eighty per cent of the record.

"Maybe the coolest thing about what we have is that we can be incredibly honest, in terms of feedback," he continues. "If somebody doesn't like a song, or if an idea is put forward, then we feel completely free to voice an objection. In the history of this band, that wasn't always the case."

Looking back, Bolan and Sabo relate the growing sense of joy as the Grönwall-fronted material began to drop into their respective inboxes.

"I think the first one that Erik did was the title track *The Gang's All Here*," Snake considers.

"Yeah," Bolan says. "As we went it around the band everyone went: 'Holy fuck', each of us adding another exclamation point."

All the same, in 2022 and moving into 2023, to those who stopped following their career with interest Skid Row find themselves in an unusual place. Despite their latest reinvention, some continue to dismiss them simply as a dated hair-metal band from the 1990s. The term doesn't sit too well with a group that takes to the stage to Ramones' *Blitzkrieg Bop* and whose set includes Bolan taking the mic for the same band's *Psychotherapy*. They certainly have a more complex DNA than their critics give them credit for.

"I guess that except for Erik we have long hair, but it's weird," the bassist says. "I've never really understood the need for so many different categories. When the band first came out we were called hair-metal, pop-metal… all sorts of things. I've never seen us as anything more than a hard rock band."

All the same, do they perhaps feel a little misunderstood?

"I didn't meet the guys until four days before my first performance with them."

Erik Grönwall

"Unfortunately it happens to a lot of bands – you can get lumped into a genre where you don't really belong," Snake pipes up. "I agree with Rachel, I always viewed Skid Row as an American hard rock band, and I still think of us that way even though we have a Swedish lead singer."

Although Skid Row's main priority is to capitalise on the response to *The Gang's All Here*, plans are being put in place for a follow-up, this time with creative input from Grönwall. In the meantime, there will be a live DVD recorded at the Forum in London.

"We've already started writing a new album," the singer confirms. "There are a few demos, and we will keep on writing. I guess maybe we'll start recording next year, but I won't make any promises about that.

"Right now we are just focused on the songs. It's going really well. I've had some ideas that I'm bringing in, and I've heard the demos from the others that sound incredible."

So for Skid Row, 2023 is a case of tour, tour, tour?

"Yeah. We start up again in March," Sabo affirms.

Will there be any further UK dates for this album?

"Oh, I'd said that's a definite," Bolan says with a broad smile.

And we managed to get through the conversation without mentioning you know who (a certain beanpole Canadian lead singer who remains firmly estranged from the group).

"Ha ha ha! Thanks a lot for that, dude," Snake says, laughing. "I really appreciate it."

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EUGENE HÜTZ

The **Gogol Bordello** frontman on the ongoing situation in Ukraine, and the power of punk-rock resistance.

Interview: **Polly Glass**

Since forming in 1999, Gogol Bordello have become synonymous with the term 'gypsy punk'. Led by Eugene Hütz – who left Kyiv as a youth with his family, ending up in New York – the multinational collective became known for riotous good times set to Romani beats, riddled with sweat and boozy subversion.

Named after Nikolai Gogol, a writer of Ukrainian origin but widely claimed by history as Russian, Gogol Bordello hid their Ukrainian-ness in plain sight. Following Putin's invasion, it's come into the spotlight. "It was all the time a 'fuck you' to Moscow," the wiry, generously moustached frontman tells us. "Now it's only getting louder."

It must be a bittersweet feeling to have people who previously knew very little about Ukraine paying closer attention to it now, but under such terrible circumstances.
Exactly. Let's not get it twisted. Even though Ukrainians are kicking ass and are as resilient as fuck, they're still going to hell; the price is still high. And of course everyone wishes there was another way of taking this heritage back.

You've become a gateway to Ukrainian culture. How does that role sit with you?
I mean, I did sign up for it when I called the band Gogol Bordello, but the extremity of the situation now, this calls to rip that Ukrainian humility off. Humility is a distinct trait of Ukrainians, to the point that it became detrimental. It came down to people like me, now, uncovering simple facts known to every Ukrainian; like Andy Warhol and [Wayne] Gretzky and Nudie Cohn ['nudie suit' designer] are all Ukrainian. The Ukrainian story, in a way, is yet to be properly told.

***Solidaritine*, the band's ninth album, feels like a return to your punk roots.**
Punk rock never left my table. Most of my friends from when we got into it at thirteen-to-fourteen years old got into electronic music. I was the guy they made fun of because I'd still pull out those *Punk And Disorderly* compilations with GBH and Angelic Upstarts, all the bands that had this knack for catapulting that Woody Guthrie protest music. For someone of my energy levels – as an art form that can catapult socio-political observations – there is nothing greater than punk rock.

With songs like *Knack For Life* and *Take Only What You Can Carry*, how much came from your earlier life, versus the past two years?
It's all from the last couple of years, because we were all subjected to some testy times. So it's like, what's the 'resilience toolbox' here? You're forced to reflect in a way that needs results. Some of it was just looking at lives of people in my family, who demonstrated such an uplifting knack for life. It puts my family's immigrant experience into a very do-able perspective, compared to the shit they went through – growing up in Holodomor [the Great Famine, in the 1930s] times in Ukraine, then going to World War Two… It's kind of unthinkable for modern people.

How are your family in Ukraine doing?
They're staying strong, everybody's okay. Talking about war in Ukraine when you are there, and outside of Ukraine, it's two very different things. Some people experience extreme devastation in occupied territories. However, it's important to understand that the Ukrainian spirit, since the beginning of it, was nowhere near petrification. The rest of the world was running around thinking: "What is going to happen?" In Ukraine everybody knew what was going to happen: we're gonna win. That's what's gonna fucking happen.

How do you feel about the world's response to the conflict at this point?
I appreciate people's compassion, going: "I'm so sorry to hear what your country's going, through." That's nice to hear, but it doesn't really acknowledge the situation on a real level. A lot of people come from a good place, and then they get emotional, like: "Oh I don't know what to do." Which isn't really helpful. Just find small things you can do, and do it; stop talking about it.

Earlier this year you sang the Ukrainian anthem at a New York benefit with Patti Smith. How did you two meet?
We were living in the same area. Eventually we were playing the same bills, and we met at the Tibet House Foundation. So when this situation came up, I reached out to people who were active with Free Tibet, and Patti was one of the leading people. That was the first event that got serious results. It was really important to hear it from iconic people, who have a serious track record of being righteous, to get on the side of Ukraine.

You've also performed for troops in Ukraine, with soldiers playing in your band.
This Ukrainian army is fighting a very modern form of activity. It has no locations, it's constantly dislocated, that's why they're winning. It was really impressive how efficient it was. The amazing thing was to see our music serving a purpose; the military band guys asked if they can keep playing the songs, as they go around front lines and perform. That was probably the highest proof of its [our music's] worth.

Don't get me wrong, it was still completely spooky and stressful. But once we got there we completely lost ourselves, bonding with these guys who still lose themselves in music, talking about life, and… and then [they] just go straight back to the trenches.

You've talked about punk being a "cultural corridor", but perhaps it's more than that.
It speaks for itself that the first band to put out a song in support of Ukraine who was not Ukrainian was Sick of It All, the New York City iconic hardcore band. Three days into the war they had a song called *God Save Ukraine*. And I was like: "Of course."

Solidaritine is out now via Cooking Vinyl.

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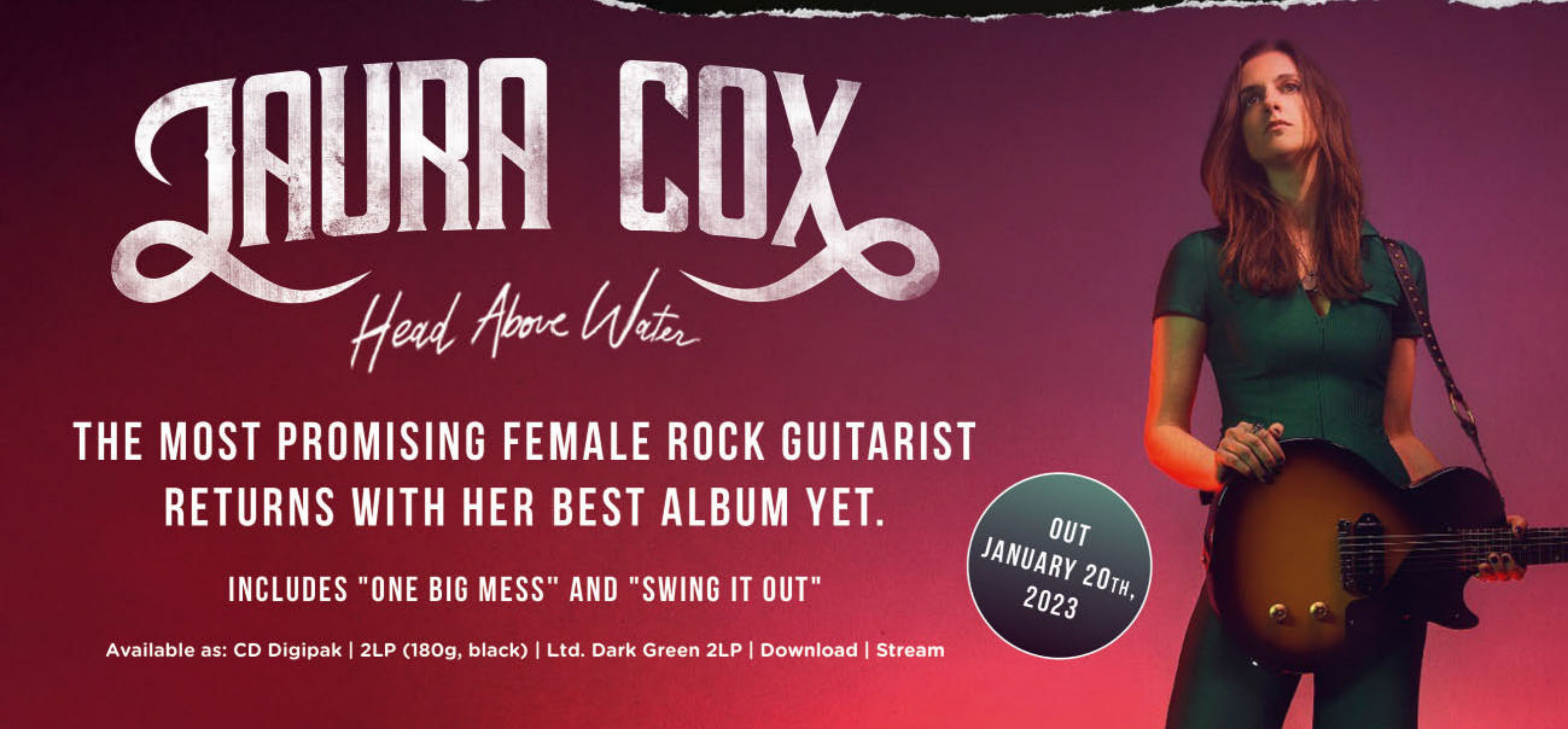
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2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Winners of Eurovision 2021 and runners-up on the Italian *X Factor* in 2017, glam hard rockers **Måneskin** have gone from hopefuls to arena-filling stars. Here's why they're the real deal.

Words: **Chris Lord**

In the spring of 2021, during the last lurches of that never-ending lockdown, rock bands across the planet were getting ready to come out of hibernation. Meanwhile, Italian quartet Måneskin were winning the Eurovision Song Contest and becoming an overnight sensation. Their spicy, riff-driven track *Zitti E Buoni* took the top prize at Eurovision. It also peaked at No.17 in the UK singles chart – the highest for an Italian-language song in three decades.

Of course, it isn't unheard of for us lot to grumble at *X Factor*, the Eurovision Song Contest and the like, but Måneskin's rise started years prior. Frustrated by a lack of opportunities for unsigned bands in Italy, they played restaurants, parties and even on the streets of Rome. Now they've all but sold-out London's O2 Arena ahead of a show next year, putting their zesty, strut-heavy brand of glam-rock in front of millions. Lead vocalist Damiano David, bassist Victoria De Angelis, guitarist Thomas Raggi and drummer Ethan Torchio tell us what 2023 holds for them.

After winning Eurovision last year, and all the attention that came with that, how has 2022 panned out for you?
Victoria De Angelis: We've done a bunch of crazy stuff that we never expected to do. We've toured basically everywhere, played in all these cities, met a lot of cool people, played TV shows, festivals, so we're really excited.
Damiano David: Things go quicker, and you have to make decisions faster, but we always try to do things that we believe in.

> **"It's not our goal to convince rock'n'roll fans that we're real rock."**
>
> Victoria De Angelis

Before Eurovision, you were runners-up on *X Factor Italia* in 2017. There's sometimes a perception that these avenues are shortcuts to success. Do you worry that you won't be taken seriously as a rock band?
DD: I would say traditional rock fans aren't our target [laughs].
VDA: When we play, people can be like: 'This is not real rock because it's on TV, so it's shit!' We don't care about it, because if you're really passionate about music you should judge the music and not where it comes from. It's not our goal to convince rock'n'roll fans that we're real rock. We're just doing our own thing. Especially when we've had the pleasure of playing with legends like Iggy Pop, the Stones, Guns N' Roses, and even they don't think about it, so other people shouldn't either. At least we're not playing trap or hip-hop!

Away from Eurovision, what do you think it is about Måneskin that has appealed to the mainstream?
DD: If we talk about analogue music in the past ten years, I think we filled an empty spot. Also our live performance; we see less and less actual performance and more backing tracks and DJ sets. Perhaps with Eurovision, people saw that we were actually playing. It was just the four of us with a lot of noise and music. I think that's what stands out and makes us a bit different to the majority of mainstream artists.

What's the strangest thing that's happened to the band this year?
DD: Chatting with the Red Hot Chili Peppers like we know them. We did a lot of crazy shit hanging out with Beck. Or having James Hetfield from Metallica in our dressing room without knowing it!

How's work on your third album shaping up?
DD: We're finally done fighting over everything: the cover, the track-list, the whole thing [laughs]. I think the next one is gonna be more complicated personality-wise. You're gonna have to see it from different points of view and perspectives to understand it. The cool thing is that it shows the differences between the four of us. Not with one topping the other, but more like putting our differences together to make good music.

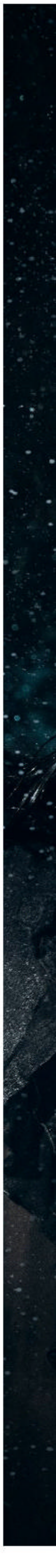
Has there been more pressure this time round?
VDA: The moment we're in the studio we try to forget about it and do what we like, otherwise it would be boring and fake. The thing that makes us especially upset is that we don't get much time. We've been through this crazy year and didn't have the chance to record the songs, listen to them and change things. This can be interesting because it's instinctive, so just what we did in the moment, but at the same time it takes away the thinking and being a hundred per cent sure of every detail. It's more of a rush.

Is singing in both Italian and English part of the band's identity?
DD: Yeah, I think it's a part of our identity and not a responsibility, but we almost have to do it because we're representing Italy. It would be a huge pity to give up Italian music, because from a certain point of view it's what made us successful.

You pulled out of Reading/Leeds festivals this year to perform at the MTV Video Music Awards . Was that a band or management decision?
DD: Whenever we have schedule conflicts it's very hard for us to choose because we would love to do everything. When you have a huge amount of opportunities it's hard to be a hundred per cent focused and choose the right thing. There's a lot of pressure, but it was a band decision. We never let anybody force us to do things. We still can't say if it was the right thing to do, it was just what we thought was best for our health in the moment.

You're playing the O2 Arena in May and it's practically sold out. That's some good going.
DD: We don't know why, but we're very good at selling tickets [laughs]. Our first tour in Italy sold out in, like, seven minutes. It's like there's this magic spell on us but we don't really know the reason.
VDA: We're good live, I guess!

Måneskin's new album Rush! is out January 20 via Columbia. .



TOMMASO OTTOMANO/PRESS

BEST REISSUES OF 2022

With notable anniversaries, mouth-watering retrospectives and great compilations, there was a ton of must-hear reissues this year. Here are some that are definitely worth your time.

RUSH

Moving Pictures 40th Anniversary UME

What we said: "Fourth record *2112* will always be the cult favourite, but *Moving Pictures* is Rush's masterwork – and their biggest seller. The £270 Super Deluxe Edition includes three CDs, one Blu-ray audio disc and five 180g black vinyl LPs – featuring the 2015 Abbey Road remasters (the first time on CD) – plus a 44-page book. The irresistible bonus is *Live In YYZ 1981* (included in more affordable 'basic' editions). This reissue is a real treasure."

VENOM

In Nomine Satanas BMG

What we said: "*In Nomine Satanas*, now available in six-CD/single-DVD format, includes Venom's original recordings for legendary Geordie NWOBHM label Neat Records, ranging from *Welcome To Hell*, via seminal second album *Black Metal* (1982), to live album *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (1986). Also included is the *Sons Of Satan* collection of previously unreleased demos, including some of their earliest known performances. Where would heavy metal be today without them? In a much healthier, less scary place, for sure. And that would be no damn good at all. 10/10."

THE BEATLES

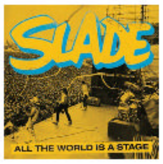
Revolver (Special Edition)

APPLE/CAPITOL/UME

What we said: "It was believed that Giles 'Son Of George' Martin would not be in a position to provide the full remix magic he'd previously performed on the multi-track recordings of the White Album and *Abbey Road* because *Revolver* had been recorded on four-track, so the guitar, bass and drums all shared the same track. Miraculously, however, using next-generation tech, Peter Jackson's team in New Zealand found a way to isolate each instrument – even taking apart the elements of Ringo's drum kit – so they could be remixed for stereo. The results are both revelatory and astonishing."

SLADE

All The World Is A Stage BMG



What we said: "Five scorching live albums boxed, three of them previously unreleased is as you like it: Slade banging it out with loose, licentious ferocity, so brutish and raucous that you begin to question whether punk needed to happen, and you keep checking that a fleet of jumbo jets hasn't landed in your ear canals. What a racket. What a riot. Arguably, nobody did adrenalin better."

PINK FLOYD

Animals 2018 Remix WARNERS

What we said: "After sitting on the shelf for a couple of years while Roger Waters reignited his feud with David Gilmour over an essay he wanted to have in the sleeve notes, the remixed version of 1997's *Animals* finally gets released. The sound is as bleak as Waters's stark, Orwellian view of the world over three lengthy songs that the comparative tenderness of the book-ending acoustic pieces does nothing to dispel. The fact that the band were sinking into an autocracy at the same time simply adds to the grim atmosphere."

SEX PISTOLS

The Original Recordings UMC

What we said: "Possibly the most straightforward job of compilation available to modern man, considering that the band only released 15 self-written songs during their brief time as a John Lydon-fronted quartet. And yet UMC have still managed to overlook *EMI*, *Liar* and *Seventeen* (aka *I'm A Lazy Sod*) in favour of the band's admittedly raucous, if hardly essential, live-in-the-studio covers of The Monkees' *(I'm Not Your) Stepping Stone* and The Who's *Substitute*. But, hey, it's on double vinyl. And transparent green vinyl. And yellow vinyl. And CD. And digital. And even cassettes. Lydon-channelling gripes aside, what's actually good about it? Sonically speaking, almost everything."

David Bowie

David Gilmour, Pink Floyd

Ian Anderson, Jethro Tull

Noddy Holder, Slade

JELLYFISH

When These Memories Fade NEW LAND +

What we said: "Jellyfish are renowned for the two landmark albums they released in the early 90s before sadly falling to bits, and *WTMF* does a very fine job of celebrating the band's enduring legacy through seven remastered seven-inch singles. From first single *The King Is Half Undressed* through to a live version of Badfinger's *No Matter What* backed with a take on Harry Nilsson's *Think About Your Troubles*, all the tracks are superb. These memories will never fade".

JETHRO TULL

Thick As A Brick 50th Anniversary

PLG UK CATALOG

What we said: "The loquacious lampoon's half-century anniversary is now celebrated with a half-speed remaster of Steven Wilson's 2012 remix, clad in the original's mock-newspaper packaging. Anderson and crew spent as long on the in-jokes and mythology of that as on recording the album, so it's good to see it returning as something loftier than fish-and-chips wrapping. Far away from its controversial birth, *Thick As A Brick* still works as an enthused, motivated statement."

LOU REED

Words And Music, May 1965

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

What we said: "Accompanied by a booklet that's longer than most bands' career, This collection of demos, mostly recorded in – you guessed it – May 1965, has been given almost reverential treatment, in the great rock tradition of these things. Filled up with curios and

DAVID BOWIE: THE DAVID BOWIE ARCHIVE BRIAN WARD/PRESS; DAVID GILMOUR: AUBREY POWELL © PINK FLOYD MUSIC LTD/PRESS; IAN ANDERSON: GETTY; NODDY HOLDER: BARRY PLUMMER/PRESS

covers – a '58 *Gee Whiz*, a '63 *Michael Row The Boat Ashore*, this collection it suggests a quieter, more lyrical songwriter than Velvet Underground Lou would become, and is nevertheless a fascinating and entirely listenable record of an imminently great talent."

BLONDIE

Against The Odds UMC

What we said: "Nearly half a century after Blondie manifested as the ultimate embodiment of mid-70s New York's anarchic downtown revolution, this gloriously chaotic band finally get their definitive box set. Years in the making, their cryptically titled motherlode chronicles the band's golden run from derided CBGB support act ("Blondie will never be a star simply because she ain't good enough," squeaked *NME*) to global chart toppers, with remastered albums joined by juicy bonus tracks (36 previously unreleased) across 10 LPs or eight CDs in Super Deluxe formats."

LITTLE FEAT

Waiting For Columbus RHINO

What we said: "Such is the sombre shadow cast by Lowell George's early death and the sorrowful soulfulness of tracks such as *Long Distance Love* that you can forget that Little Feat were a fun proposition. *Waiting For Columbus*, based on live 1977 recordings, now comes in a Super Deluxe edition. Tracks featuring for the first time include an alternative version of *Fat Man In The Bathtub*, and several recordings from Manchester City Hall, including *Rock And Roll Doctor* and *Time Loves A Hero*. Essentially this collection captures a lingering moment, in which a fine group make the sort of connection with an audience that not all fine groups can."

THE ROLLING STONES

El Mocambo 1977 / Licked Live in NYC

UNIVERSAL/MERCURY STUDIOS

What we said: "The two-CD set of the complete [El Mocambo, Toronto] show has been remixed by Bob Clearmountain, who has ditched the overdubs and some 'unwoke' Mick Jagger jokes, although he has kept an exchange between Jagger and Ronnie Wood as they wonder which song Richards is going to play next – "I dunno, he keeps changing guitars". The sound is ragged at times (they hadn't played in seven months), but it's real.

Licked Live In NYC is from a restored 2003 TV special from Madison Square Garden that features the Rolling Stones Big Band – two keyboard players, a four-piece horn section and three backing singers. So the sound is big, but not glossy."

AL STEWART

The Admiralty Lights MADFISH

What we said: "This is not a resume of Al Stewart's career. This is Al Stewart's career, expanded, enhanced, annotated and chronicled across 50 (yes, 50) CDs, a 160-page hardback book, a 24-page annotated guide to the track-listing, two posters and two prints. The 21 albums Stewart has released since 1967's *Bedsitter Images* are not even the half of it. There are another 18 live CDs, three discs of BBC sessions and eight discs of demos, out-takes etc. This has to be the most comprehensive retrospective ever compiled for a single artist."

THE CLASH

Combat Rock SONY

What we said: "Classic line-up of The Clash's surreal last statement, now expanded with rarities. The People's Hall bonus disc adds early *Radio Clash* and *Know Your Rights* versions, B-sides and curios including racy out-take instrumental *He Who Dares Or Is Tired*, and *Outside Bonds* acknowledging 1981's NY-conquering residency with field-recorded street sounds… This magnificent set – on triple vinyl! – is a vital snapshot of The Clash's glorious last stand."

T.REX

1972 DEMON

What we said: "This is a terrific package with mind-bogglingly comprehensive sleeve notes and super photos. Bolan's naive missteps form part of its charms. Listening to the audio from the Empire Pool matinee concert, one cannot help but detect a degree of confusion from the audience, largely composed of teenage girls, when Marc embarks on yet another freak-out guitar solo. The sounds of Marc in the early stages of an, ultimately tragic, implosion is what makes *1972* such an essential purchase, even at £100-plus for the full-on bells-and-whistles edition."

BRIAN MAY

Another World Deluxe Edition EMI

What we said: "While his 1992 debut album *Back To The Light* and Queen's bittersweet 1995 swan song *Made In Heaven* felt like extensions of the grieving process in the wake of his friend and bandmate Freddie Mercury's death, *Another World* sounded like the work of a man embracing the world again, despite whatever personal turmoil he was going through. This expanded, two-disc Deluxe Edition is both welcome (the original album is long out of print and not even on Spotify) and fascinating, and provides an intriguing snapshot of the guitarist's many facets."

Keith Richards

Brian May

Mick Jagger, The Rolling Stones

Joe Strummer, The Clash

Marc Bolan, T.Rex

KEITH RICHARDS

Main Offender 30th Anniversary BMG

What we said: "The second X-pensive Winos record, beautifully repackaged with a previously unheard show. This sublimely classy reissue comes clad in a leather-bound book with photos, lyrics and memorabilia, plus previously unreleased *Winos Live In London '92* capturing the ecstatic second December '92 night at London's Town And Country Club that happened to be Richards's forty-ninth birthday. Like a fine wine, this magic band seems to taste better with age; a deliciously unique sensation that'll send fans of Richards and both his bands spinning deliriously off the wagon."

LEMONHEADS

It's A Shame About Ray FIRE RECORDS

What we said: "In 1992, through all the angst and anguish, the shirt ripping and guitar flinging of grunge, shot a *Ray* of light. Lemonheads instantly encapsulated a far more idyllic form of teen spirit. Half an hour of breezy grunge folk odes to friendship, romance, layabout living and recreational drugs, capped with the flying freak flag of a casual acoustic cover of *Frank Mills* from *Hair*, *It's A Shame About Ray* was a stepping stone between the melodic end of US grunge (Buffalo Tom, Smashing Pumpkins) and the cult indie-rock and alt. folk acts of the later 90s (Elliott Smith, Fountains Of Wayne, Ryan Adams)."

DAVID BOWIE

Divine Symmetry (An Alternative Journey Through Hunky Dory)

PARLOPHONE

What we said: "From demos of *Hunky Dory* material and other songs (including *King Of The City*, a fantastic song, previously unknown to most people) to BBC sessions and concerts, *Divine Symmetry (An Alternative Journey Through Hunky Dory)* is a comprehensive trawl through 1971 – and an extraordinary one. Gone is everything from the proto-metal apocalypse of *The Man Who Sold The World* bar *The*

MARC BOLAN: GETTY; JOE STRUMMER: PAUL SLATTERY/PRESS; MICK JAGGER: GETTY; BRIAN MAY: RICHARD GRAY/PRESS; KEITH RICHARDS: CLAUDE GASSIAN/PRESS

Supermen; now there are piano ballads, acoustic musings and a lot of Biff Rose. This Bowie is a singer-songwriter, and he's about to be very good at it."

NEU

50! GRONLAND

What we said: "Despite releasing just three official albums during their short, combustible but intensely creative collaboration, seminal early-70s Krautrock duo Neu! helped shape the past five decades of avant-pop, noise-rock, post-punk and beyond. Squeezed into this lavishly packaged but compact five-disc box set are propulsive classics that clearly influenced Bowie and Eno, Joy Division and PiL, Blur and Stereolab, from shiny ambient blueprints such as *Im Glück* and *Leb' Wohl* to the proto-punk avant-primitivism of *Negativland* and *Hero*."

HAWKWIND

Dust Of Time: An Anthology 1969-2021

ESOTERIC

What we said: "The 81-track, six-CD retrospective *Dust Of Time* is as fulsome and monolithic and progressive and spaced-out and indulgent and influential as you'd expect. Heavy metal, trance, acid-rock, acid-house…Hawkwind's 'outsider' legacy and audience have travelled many different and unlikely routes. This box set comes with a new interview with the band's visionary leader Dave Brock, detailing his formative years as a busker on London Transport, through the formation of Hawkwind, and more – so much more."

SPARKS

Balls / Lil' Beethoven / Hello Young Lovers

BMG

What we said: "With the Mael brothers' career enjoying an Indian summer in recent years, as films about them or written by them besiege the streaming platforms, it's fitting that their early 21st-century work gets a relaunch. As the century began, Sparks were singing *Balls*. They're all you need to succeed, they posited, somehow deadpan despite the artfully histrionic voice and layered electronic pulse. On 2002's *Lil' Beethoven* they revamped their sound: faux-classical chamber-pop with no beats, its repetitive minimalism will drive you crazy. For 2006's *Hello Young Lovers* they fused the operatic and the rhythmic to, well, first of all, *Dick Around* (a single the BBC banned). They then subverted *The Star- Spangled Banner*, and informed us that *There's No Such Thing As Aliens*."

"I THINK IT COMES FROM THEIR FINGERS AND THE GUITARS"

Giles Martin explains what he learned about The Beatles' *Revolver* while remixing (and de-mixing) the 1966 milestone album.

Interview: **Christopher Scapelliti**

It's undeniable that the Beatles' *Revolver* is a psychedelic rock landmark, a sonic marvel that marked a sea change in music production and culture. And in 2022 it was revisited for the full deluxe reissue treatment.

In 1966, joined by their new recording engineer Geoff Emerick, The Beatles and producer George Martin set about using the recording studio as their sonic workshop, creating sounds never heard before and introducing classical Indian music into Western pop rock.

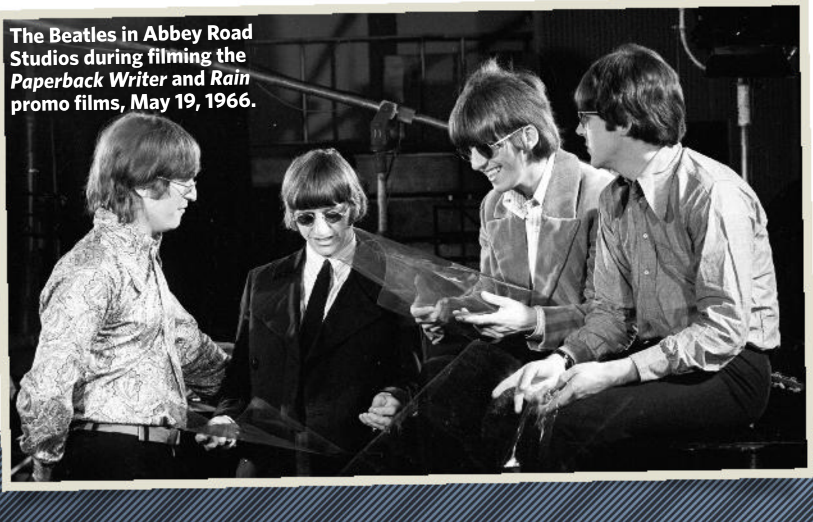
But, like most pre-1968 Beatles albums, *Revolver* was recorded to four-track tape, with the result that the main rhythm instruments – usually guitar, bass and drums – were placed together on one track, making it impossible to separate them for stereo mixes.

Using ground-breaking de-mixing technology, Giles Martin – George Martin's son, and the producer behind much of the group's reissues in recent years – was able to separate the instruments, and even the individual pieces of the drum kit, without losing the room ambience or creating ugly artifacts. Here he explains more.

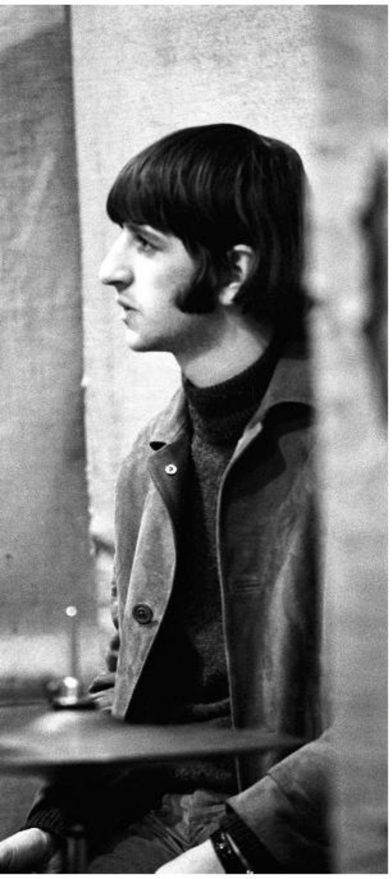
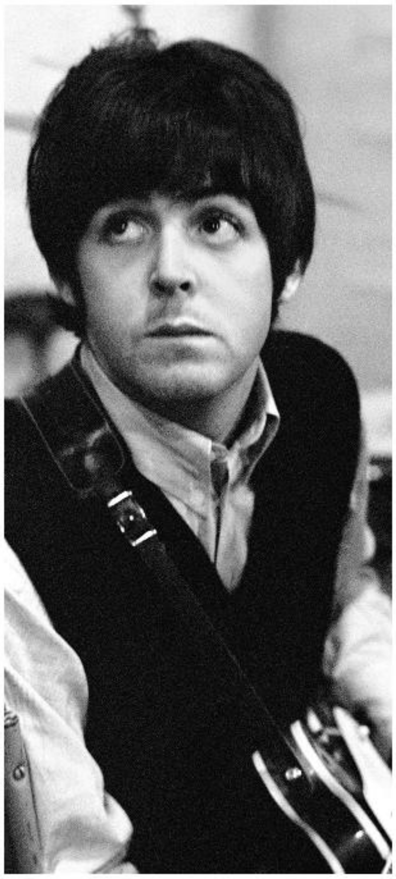
What were the challenges of de-mixing and re-mixing *Revolver*?

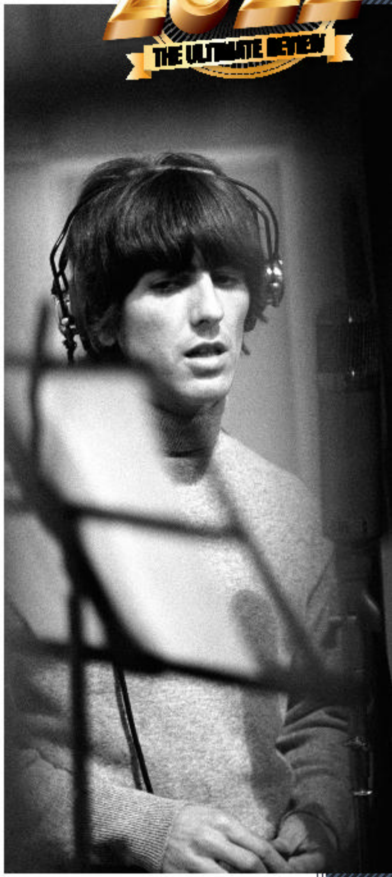
Well, it's funny. Geoff Emerick, The Beatles and my dad were pretty good to begin with, and the album sounds pretty good. And, you know, it is very compressed, and I've still respected that. But in order to have the band sound like they're in a room, you kind of have to pull them apart to a certain extent and put some air between them.

And on *Revolver* John Lennon never sings in the same voice. It's different on every song. Same thing with the guitars and drums. Remixing it was like mixing eight different bands.



The Beatles in Abbey Road Studios during filming the *Paperback Writer* and *Rain* promo films, May 19, 1966.



The Beatles at Abbey Road during the recording the *Revolver* in 1966.

It's come down through history that Geoff Emerick was critical to helping your father and The Beatles create these new sounds. Do you think that assessment accurate?
Listen, Geoff was a genius, yes. But I think it comes from their fingers and the guitars. My dad would say this, and Geoff would have said this as well, I think – before he became too bitter. The sounds came from themselves and their willingness to innovate, especially with guitars. So the disappointing answer for everyone is: it's the band. And the reason why it's disappointing is because you're looking for which knob you can turn [laughs].

And which box you can plug in to.
Absolutely – to get that sound. And that's the tricky thing.

There's a video of you, your father and George Harrison's son Dhani listening to a 'lost' George solo recorded for the *Abbey Road* track *Here Comes the Sun* that you discovered. Were there any surprises like that with *Revolver*?
No. But there was a thing with fuzz guitars. They were originally going to play [on guitars] the horn lines on *Got to Get You Into My Life*, but they decided to go with brass instead.

Just the opposite of what happened on the Rolling Stones' *Satisfaction*.
Yeah! So that exists in a previous version of the song. But because the recordings were four-track, if they didn't get something right they'd just record over it. So there are no hidden gems. But you really get a sense of their efficiency.

For example *Paperback Writer*, there's just one and a half takes of the basic track, which is guitars and drums. So I've just left the tape running for this box set. They play, it breaks down, they immediately play it again, and that's it! It's all done but the bass and vocals. It's very efficient.

As well as being a classic album, *Revolver* is also a psychedelic rock landmark. De-mixing it probably presents you with an opportunity to make it more vivid – more what they might have done at the time had multitrack technology existed.
The tricky thing is, the claustrophobia you get from mono can make things sound more psychedelic, and when you open things up it can sound less so. And the challenge is with something like *Tomorrow Never Knows*: the expectation is it's this crazy song. And it is – but it isn't.

Keeping it in the family: Beatles producer Sir George Martin and son Giles Martin who remixed *Revolver*.

© APPLE CORPS LTD. SIR GEORGE MARTIN AND GILES MARTIN: GETTY

There's bass and drums, there's a bit of tamboura, there's an organ, tape loops… And that's it. There's not much going on. So you really have to work at it to create something that satisfies the expectation.
When I was working with [Martin] Scorsese on the George Harrison film [the 2011 documentary *Living In The Material World*], he questioned my revisionist approach to mixing. Then I played him some stuff I'd done, and he liked it. I said: "I just try to make songs sound how we remember them, not how they are."

Having literally dissected the *Revolver* album, what's your takeaway about The Beatles at that point in their musical evolution?
You can hear them like kids in the back of a car saying: "We're bored! We want to do something different." That's what's going on with *Revolver*. It's like a prog record – kind of like: "Look how many ideas we have!"

And what I find fascinating is that they went from being this four-headed monster with Beatles suits on to being these four individuals going in different directions – but helping each other. Like, no one's saying: "Come on, John, change chords on *Tomorrow Never Knows*." Or, you know: "Why are we doing Indian songs? We're from Liverpool!" It's like that pure confidence of jumping out of the plane without a parachute and knowing you're going to land safely. *Revolver* is kind of a fearless record.

MONSTERS OF ROCK

We joined **Monster Truck** and **Those Damn Crows** on tour to discover how they keep it fully rock'n'roll, with tales of road burn, broken bones and smoke – lots of smoke. Live is definitely back.

Words: **Polly Glass** Photos: **Will Ireland**

For years, Monster Truck practically lived in arenas. The support band of choice for heavyweights including Deep Purple, Nickelback, ZZ Top and Alice In Chains. Their hearty yet soulful take on classic heaviness resonated powerfully – at a time when bands of their ilk hadn't proliferated in the way they have since. It was a long way from the DIY world that bred them.

"Whatever we're doing struck a real chord with a lot of different older musicians that are successful," says guitarist Jeremy Widerman. "They all picked us. They listened to it, and they were like, 'fuck yeah'."

You suspect it also had something to do with Monster Truck as people. Down-to-earth Canadians with chops full of AC/DC, Deep Purple and Grand Funk Railroad, they exude the working-class ethic of their roots in Hamilton – a town in Ontario known for its steel industry, with punk rock in its veins. They're not hard to get on with; Alice In Chains liked them so much they routinely invited them to play golf, and (in bassist Mike Inez's case) wanted to play a song with them every night.

Now, armed with new album *Warriors*, they're back in British clubs as headliners – with Those Damn Crows in the opening spot. The hottest thing to come out of the Welsh valleys since Tom Jones, the Crows have also beefed up their game as arena openers. They've even headlined a castle or two in their motherland.

"We've been spoiled a bit, in these larger venues," says singer Shane Greenhall, a strapping, stocky guy with a megawatt smile and arms full of ink. "But really it doesn't matter how big the stage is. We act like it's a stadium."

"It feels good to be doing this, we're drawing fans, selling merch. It feels like a victory for sure."

Jeremy Widerman

Separated by an ocean and accents, and united by a lot of musical DNA, Monster Truck and Those Damn Crows feel like a good match. Everyone's almost disarmingly approachable, invariably up for a chat or a beer. You'd be very hard pushed to find a less diva-like line-up.

But as we'll discover over the next couple of days, there are other, fundamental things they share. Fierce self-sufficiency. Humour tempered by tragedy. Punk hearts beating beneath meaty classic rock.

It's four o'clock when we arrive at London's Islington Assembly Hall. Monster Truck's keyboard player Brandon Bliss zig-zags past gear and crew, breezing into the venue's backstage reaches as if he'd known them forever (they arrived about an hour ago). He multitasks almost constantly. A natural, friendly organiser with a look that's part-sports coach, part-surfer dude, Bliss has doubled as Monster Truck's tour manager for years now. In his twenties he did backline and tech for Paul Weller, The Blue Man Group and others.

Revving up: Monster Truck soundchecking.

In the Monster Truck dressing room we're met by a table of sparkling water, gin and oat milk. Green lumps perch on most surfaces (if we'd forgotten that marijuana is legal in Canada, the sporting quantities here would be a good reminder).

New drummer Theo McKibbon greets us cheerfully. An old friend from the Hamilton punk/metal scene, he works in sales by day. Touring with these guys is several cuts above his previous travels. "That was with a bunch of DIY punk rock and garage rock bands," he grins toothily, fresh from Facetiming his three-year-old son, "sleeping on floors with five guys in a hotel room. So this is much nicer."

Jeremy Widerman extends a hand, head newly shaved. Slim and serious, the guitarist is the most introverted person in the band, with the most to say. We met before on a publicity stunt that involved driving round London in (yes, *really*) a monster truck. It's part of the territory with a name like theirs. A name that never stops being… well, kind of funny.

Keep on damn truckin: (l-r) David Winchurch, Ian 'Shiner' Thomas, Jeremy Widerman, Shane Greenhall, Jon Harvey, Ronnie Huxford, Theo McKibbon, Brandon Bliss, Lloyd Wood.

"The other night at dinner, the chef asked me what I was doing here, because he heard the accent, and…" he thinks, "and you're exactly right. I'm ready for it every single time now. So he says 'what's the band called?', I said 'Monster Truck,' and I giggled immediately with him because I knew he was going to laugh."

Over on the sofa, singer/bassist Jon Harvey plays the riff from Heart's *Barracuda*. Towering and genial, with a slightly spaced-out smile under thick layers of frizz, he introduces his girlfriend Simara (the Truck's new shit-kicker *Golden Woman* is about her) who's curled up in joggers and a Cypress Hill T-shirt. Puffs of smoke periodically engulf them both.

Upstairs, as guitars are unboxed, TDC bassist Lloyd Wood – blond and baby-faced in spacer earrings, with a tattoo of Garth from *Wayne's World* on one arm – bounds over to say hello. By day he's a carpenter with two teenage stepdaughters. The last time we met he was playing a show on a busted ankle – a not-infrequent side-effect of the Crows' live set.

The quiet before the storm…

"Strap it up, a few painkillers," he shrugs with a grin. "It's rock'n'roll innit?"

Down in the Crows' dressing room, guitarist David Winchurch trims his moustache and Greenhall tells us how he broke his back. He was cycling down a hill, he says, while listening to the band's game-raising next album, *Inhale/Exhale*. "I hit a humpback bridge. I shot off like fucking ET! I came down hard and I felt a shooting pain up my back, and it just seized up." The injury forced them to cancel a few gigs and festival appearances. Now, there's a sense that a lot hangs on these shows, as bands fight to retain and regain momentum.

"Everyone's watching," Widerman says, over in Monster Truck's room. "Like, how many gigs do you sell? How good is your new record? Whether it's media, management, other bands, booking agents, venues. Everyone wants to get back to the status quo, that's why it feels good to be doing this, we're drawing fans, selling merch. It feels like a victory for sure."

Come showtime, the chants that greet Those Damn Crows could have been for headliners. Drums thunder. Riffs are deep and deliciously metallic. Ronnie and Lloyd fizzle with boxer-like bravado, flanked by on-the-money guitarists Winchurch and Ian 'Shiner' Thomas. At the mic, Greenhall commands the room like Eddie Vedder in the ring, his huge voice reflecting tastes that take in Andrea Bocelli as well ▷

Those Damn Crows' Shane Greenhall is apparently fine with heights.

grunge greats. It's a genuinely exciting thing to witness.

"It's *sensational*!" Greenhall declares of *Inhale/Exhale*, as they dive into its scorching taster single *Wake Up*. "I know you've gotta say that, but… it fucking is!"

For the grand finale he legs it through the audience and up to the balcony – the *edge* of the balcony. The crowd whoops. For a horrifying moment it looks as though he'll jump off, but thankfully he retreats and *Rock'n'Roll Ain't Dead* leaves the room chanting.

Downstairs we can still hear the chants, booming like refrains at a football stadium.

"You're so *pumped* and the energy is just insane," Greenhall says, panting, "the sheer volume of the crowd. Then you go backstage, I get ten minutes by myself because the boys are packing away, they always say 'go and change, don't go outside'. So it's silent."

He glances briefly down at his arm, tattooed with portraits of Johnny Cash, Chris Cornell, Kurt Cobain and David Bowie. There's also one of his father, who died eleven years ago.

"It can mess with your head a bit," reflects Greenhall.

Back upstairs, beers are raised across the sea of heads as Monster Truck blast into a jubilant, juicy *Old Train*. Harvey roars, part-lion part-biker, one boot on a box bearing the command 'DON'T FUCK WITH THE TRUCK.' To his left is Widerman, topless and lean like a bare-knuckle fighter, shaking his head and leaping in fits of raw energy. *Fuzz Mountain* is just as dirty and punchy as you'd hope, everyone bellows in approval and a middle-aged couple snog furiously at the back.

"I came out of this pandemic thinking: 'I want to do *everything*'," Harvey will tell us later, calling to mind the live-in-the-moment spirit that led – perhaps ill-advisedly – to his role in Kid Rock's gun-toting, millennial-bashing video, to go

"It doesn't matter how big the stage is. We act like it's a stadium."

Shane Greenhall

with his cover of Monster Truck's *Don't Tell Me How To Live*. It was polarising in a very braindead sort of way. Understandably, not everyone liked it.

"I'm Canadian, I've never shot a gun in my life, I don't want to," Harvey says assuredly with a shrug. "He has his politics, I have mine. I did it [the video] because there are things that only happen once in life, and I said yes."

But then, on stage, something happens that eclipses all that. In the downstairs seating area, a disabled child with ear defenders is dancing to every song, clearly having the time of their life. Widerman notices, and his face brightens and he points: "This next one's for *you*!". Up in the balcony, another kid – who is here thanks to the work of Nordoff Robbins music therapy charity, we subsequently learn – waves and claps.

Afterwards we find the band sweaty, buzzing and catching their breath in the dressing room. Beers, joints and high-fives flow. For all the measured, 'adult' sides of their operation, playing to a full, happy crowd doesn't get old.

Over in a corner, Widerman stands, buzzing. He thinks of those two children in the audience, and we notice the large scar running down his chest.

Rock'n'roll ain't dead: Those Damn Crows go down a treat.

The next day by Brighton beach, the Concorde 2 pairs apocalyptically with grey skies, neighbouring playgrounds and crazy golf courses. Turquoise oxidised copper roofing and stained glass windows give the venue an air of faded glamour. Two women with pushchairs dance outside as Monster Truck soundcheck with *Golden Woman*.

Inside we find Ronnie Huxford sorting cymbals. The bright-eyed, pint-sized Those Damn Crows drummer had children at a young age, having met his wife at sixteen. For a long time he paid the bills with a successful tattoo shop (he and Shiner live in the valleys, while the other three are in Bridgend). During the pandemic he left the business to focus on the band, at the behest of his wife. "She said 'this is what you love, this is the man I married, do it.'"

He nods, thoughtfully. "You've gotta enjoy it, haven't you?"

In the Monster Truck dressing room, Widerman has already clingfilmed the smoke alarm. His mother taught him his first guitar chords, but his childhood was blighted by illness, sending him in and out of hospital for heart and kidney surgery and a close call with spina bifida. He's "as normal as anybody" now, but once in a while remembers how much harder life might have been.

"I forget it on a regular basis, or take it for granted," he says. "And last night, seeing those kids in the audience that were differently abled, I remembered. And I was like 'fuck man, that could have been me'."

Elsewhere in Hamilton, Harvey was a middle-child with religious parents. His father introduced him to blues and gospel records that would eventually come out in his own voice. As a child he sang in church, while his father played guitar. It was a "chaotic" pentecostal revival in Florida, when he was seventeen, that ended his relationship with God. Rock'n'roll still isn't his father's 'thing'.

"I think he wants me to be a Christian," Harvey says. "He believes something and of course he wants me to believe it, because he wants to feel assured that I will be 'saved' or whatever. We love each other, but our interests are different."

While Those Damn Crows soundcheck, Monster Truck head out along the pebble beach, past fish and chip stands and tarot readers. We wind up in a tiny bar in Brighton's Lanes, where Widerman picks NOFX on the jukebox. "It's kind of who we are as people," Bliss says, ordering beers as talk turns to Hamilton's punk underbelly. "We never ever did well enough or had enough success to get rid of the punk attitude that we grew up with."

Growing up nearby in suburban Toronto, Bliss watched his father "pretty much sacrifice everything" as an Olympic

Smokin': Monster Truck's Jon Harvey and Jeremy Widerman.

Jon Harvey and 'Golden Woman' girlfriend Simara.

That went Truckin' well: (l-r) Bliss, Harvey, McKibbon and Widerman.

sprint canoer, ultimately working in the local steel industry. Initially Bliss followed him into it, working on the sites and eventually in the office. "A lot of that knowledge of how business works holds me in good stead today," he says.

Gradually he became immersed in Hamilton's web of bartending jobs, sound gigs, bands and venues, meeting the rest of Monster Truck in the process. It was an exciting, hard-core training ground, with brutal winters, snowstorms and constant troubleshooting par for the course.

"We were young and Canadian and just really keen," he recalls, "we didn't know anything else. It's like 'okay boys, we leave at eight a.m. and we *might* get to the venue at 5pm if we only have two stops…'" He grins. You can see that part of him is wired to nomadic life. "I love home until I've been there about three weeks."

Meanwhile in the Welsh valleys, Those Damn Crows cut their teeth in various punk, metal and covers bands. At sixteen they were booking coaches to drive local fans to London showcases. Now older and savvier (like Monster Truck they have an average age of about forty), the drive hasn't diminished. Nor has the dream.

"Stadiums," replies Greenhall, at once, when asked about this. "I think that's the dream for all of us. It's a little tongue-in-cheek but there's a complete seriousness about it. Otherwise, what are we doing this for?"

Watching tonight, that seriousness is on display. It's another commanding set. Three of the Crows (Ronnie, Lloyd and David) lost a parent in the last couple of years, and it comes out in the power of tracks like *Wake Up* and *Sin On Skin*. Depth behind the energy. Quiet conviction that's shared by Monster Truck.

"I was certain we were going to be successful," Widerman says, remembering the night he and Harvey got drunk at a house party, plotting to start a band and call it Monster Truck. "Because of my experience of being in, like, sixteen other bands and not ever having that kind of synergy. So I was sure that we were going to have a lot of attention. But I wouldn't have guessed that we'd be doing it this far away in time."

"I feel blessed while it lasts," Harvey smiles, joint in hand. "Do what makes you happy. That's the way I look at it. I never thought we'd do any of this shit. There's no way I thought we'd still be coming to the UK playing to this many people."

On stage, a transformation of sorts takes place. They stand taller. Crackle with intent. Suddenly you can see all those years of ill-fated bands, divey clubs and perilous drives through Canadian snowstorms. While generously sized, tonight's crowd is more chilled than yesterday's, but as they nail a swamp-fried *Sweet Mountain River*, there's a ripple of electricity that bleeds through the volume.

> **"We never ever had enough success to get rid of the punk attitude that we grew up with."**
>
> **Brandon Bliss**

And it hits us. The reason Monster Truck and Those Damn Crows keep doing this, and people keep watching. The reason anyone plays or listens to this kind of proudly classic rock, at a time when it's so unfashionable. They do it because they can't not. Because it isn't about what's cool, or the next big thing. We all do it because we love it.

"If people want to see us, we'll come and play for them forever," says Bliss. "As long as it's feasible, we'll do it. I still think it's cool that we have this thing that allows us to do that at all, because growing up that's all you dreamed of."

It's overcast the next morning as we head north. Clouds of drizzle meet crumbling Regency-style buildings along the seafront. The flashing lights and arcades of the Palace Pier look surreal.

But as Mountain's *Mississippi Queen* blasts out of the speakers, in a strange way rock'n'roll seems to have the last word.

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Gene Simmons: looking towards the future.

GENE SIMMONS

We delve deeper into the psyche of The Demon, touching on his teenage years, Kiss's farewell tour, and mortality.

Interview: **Ken Sharp** Photo: **Ross Halfin**

In typical Kiss fashion, rumours of their *imminent* demise may have been a tad exaggerated. With plans afoot for a 50 Years Of Kiss world tour in 2023, Gene Simmons clearly has his eye on the future. As the band wind down, Simmons, a self-described serial entrepreneur, has already proactively launched shopgenesimmons.com, a venture centred on merchandise sporting logo permutations of his money-bag trademark; genesimmonsauctions.com; and Gene Simmons' Kiss World in Las Vegas, showing The Demon's vast personal collection of memorabilia and one-of a-kind personal items.

At the show I saw on Kiss's 'End Of The Road' tour, I don't think I've ever seen Paul Stanley smile so much. Is there a sense within the band that now the end is coming let's enjoy every moment on that stage?

Yeah. Considering we started in 1974 and we're in the year 2022 now and probably by 2024 we'll be done. That's enough. Fifty years is enough for anybody. And also out of respect and love for the fans, you want to get off the stage while the getting is good; you've got to have a sense of pride and know when it's time. Of course, everything comes to an end at some point, and you're lucky and blessed if that last lap around the track is your victory lap. You celebrate the past. But of course, that thing is going to be over at some point in your life. You've got to leave home. You've got to leave mom and dad and go off on your own and start that next chapter. And by the way, at some point life itself is going to be over.

Talking of leaving home, what was your bedroom like as a teenager? What would we have seen in there?

I was living at my mother's house, so I put nothing on the walls – nothing. At about thirteen, fourteen, I was learning to play just by watching people's hands on guitar. My mother bought me an SG standard Gibson and I remember thinking: "Oh, my god, my fingers are killing me. How can anybody play this?" But slowly I started to play a C chord and then a G chord and so on…

> **"All the knowledge in the world doesn't prepare you for life."**
>
> Gene Simmons

Who was your best friend growing up, and who is your best friend today?

I'm a strange duck. I've hardly had any friends. I never really hung out. I never drank, so that was out. I wouldn't hang out on street corners and smoke cigarettes and all that stuff. I was just busy doing what I wanted to do and chasing girls. That didn't leave time for friends. I didn't go to baseball games. I kept reading about what friends do: they hang out with each other, they call each other: "Hey, I need a favour". I never had that.

What's the source of that insular nature where you really didn't have a need to connect with people?

Even today, as I sit here, other than Paul – and we only get together when we do stuff with the band… How do I say this without sounding inhuman? I don't have friends. Yeah, if friends means: "Gee, I don't know what I'm going to do this afternoon. Hey, you want to come over and hang out?" I don't hang out. I've never hung out. I'm more interested in what I want to do, and I don't want to pretend that I'm interested in what you want to do because, I'm not.

What are the things you wish you had known when you were younger that would have made your life a little easier?

That it didn't matter what I thought I knew and it didn't matter what I knew. You still have to wade through the jungle by yourself. All the knowledge in the world or no knowledge at all doesn't prepare you for life, because there's no one journey, there's no one road.

It's an interesting question. I really don't have regrets, because you live and you learn. I don't want to quote Alanis Morrisette, but the life experience itself is going to be the best teacher. If you don't learn from your mistakes, then that's on you.

You're closer to the finish of life than to the beginning. How often do you think about your own mortality, and what's your philosophy about death?

I'd be a complete asshole – certainly more than I am now – if I wasn't grateful for this amazing life. I mean, if it ended today, I know what my tombstone would say. It would say: "Thank you and good night." What more could you hope for? So I'm not afraid of death – unless a car is coming straight into your face. You kind of go: "Oh my God!" But that's just instinct.

Do you think about death much more now?

I do, but only in terms of pragmatism, which is how up-to-date is the will. I want to make sure there are no taxes, there are no liens, there's no nothing, so that my family and my kids get taken care of. Just sort of pragmatic taking care of business.

What's your belief system in what happens when you die?

I'm okay if there's a heaven and a God. I'm okay with it. I'm also okay if there's nothing.

What do you lean towards?

I lean towards nothing. My question is: if we get an afterlife, do mosquitoes? Maybe my mother's sort of wise statement about every day above ground is a good day, and that's it.

THE ULTIMATE PLAYLIST OF 2022

Need a bunch of top tunes to wrap your ears around? Cue this *CR*-selected lot up on your preferred mode of music delivery and listen to some of the best new tracks released this year.

Words: **Henry Yates**, **Polly Glass**

THE VETERANS

Choons from the A-list.

DEF LEPPARD

Take What You Want

Leppard threw everything at *Diamond Star Halos*, and nowhere is that more apparent than on this scorching opening track. A resounding banger with substance and swishiness.

SLASH FT MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS

The River Is Rising

Four albums into a blissful marriage with Myles and co, Slash seemingly dug into his *Appetite*-era box of tricks for this beauty. Heavy and dirty and recorded hot off the studio floor, it's one of their rawest and most effective moments yet.

ZZ TOP

Blue Jean Blues

There are plenty of rip-roaring knees-ups on *Raw*, but it's on this smooth, supremely cool 12-bar ballad that Billy Gibbons unlocks a fresh reservoir of soul – the sort he's always had inside, now realised on an oft-overlooked ZZ gem.

OZZY OSBOURNE

One Of Those Days

Eric Clapton joins the Prince Of Darkness on this moody, majestic highlight from *Patient No. 9*, all beefy velvet, existential crises, and a Zeppelin-esque belter of a chorus. Thought Ozzy's best days were well behind him? You were wrong.

SCORPIONS

Rock Believer

Only Scorpions make 'em like this any more, it seems. From the twin-lead guitar screams of the intro to the tender verse vocals and a big, feelgood chorus, it's exactly what you want from a love letter to the power of rock'n'roll.

EDDIE VEDDER

Long Way

The Pearl Jam singer is on stellar form on this, the first and best single from his 2022 solo album *Earthling*. A blissed-out kaleidoscope of warm Americana, acoustic strumming and stunning electric solos. Oh, and sweet, sweet harmonies.

THE BLACK KEYS

Wild Child

You can feel the fun Messrs Auerbach and Carney (hopefully) had making this one; a funky, 70s-infused, gigantic blues-rock boogie. Equal parts groove, sass and swagger, it restores the Keys to the catchiness levels of classics like *Lonely Boy*.

BILLY IDOL

The Cage

The title track of Billy's latest EP, with guitarist Steve Stevens on scorching form and Idol sounding unfazed by the passage of time, is the sort of heartfelt banger that plenty in his shoes would've given up striving for. Thank god he hasn't.

THE HEAVY STUFF

Hard rockers and big fucking riffs.

ALTER BRIDGE

This Is War

Myles Kennedy's mad-monk backing vocals are sinister, but when guitarist Mark Tremonti's brutal brick-wall chug enters at the half-minute, Alter Bridge's *Pawns & Kings* opener makes an actual military conflict sound like wind chimes.

Kris Barras

Dorothy

Billy Idol

Monster Truck

HALESTORM

The Steeple

Lzzy Hale cites the writing of this twisty-riffed anthem as her impetus for vacating the couch post-covid, and you don't need a poetry degree to feel her fiery rebirth (*'It stopped raining in my head today, I finally feel like myself again/Redemption's here at last'*).

KRIS BARRAS BAND

These Voices

The hands that used to deal out jabs on the Mixed Martial Arts circuit have never been more brutal than on the intro riff of this track – "It's always a classic headbanging moment of the set," Barras says – before he cleanses our palate with a sunburst chorus that washes away "that niggling voice in your head".

DOROTHY

A Beautiful Life

Heavy in every sense, the opener of the band's *Gifts From The Holy Ghost* album finds Dorothy Martin lamenting the "suicide and near-death experiences" of lost souls dear to her. If you're stepping towards the light, the thrilling pay-off *'Don't let the demons get you down!'* will pull you back.

MONSTER TRUCK

Golden Woman

You'd never guess that Jon Harvey wrote the most pulverising riff from the Truck's *Warriors* album on his son's toy guitar. And it's similarly an eye-opener to learn that beneath the sonic napalm, this is the purest of love songs (the titular golden woman is the frontman's partner Simara).

CLUTCH

Slaughter Beach

We shudder to think what Clutch frontman Neil Fallon must have witnessed on his late-night walk along the Delaware Bay that inspired this song ("Odd things happen there"). A doomy lyric referencing *'maritime tragedies'* is complemented by a groove like Godzilla wading ashore.

KRIS BARRAS: JOHN MCMURTRIE; MONSTER TRUCK: JAMES HEASLIP

H.E.A.T
Nationwide
Returning frontman Kenny Leckremo isn't messing about at the microphone, screeching the Swedes through a breakneck anthem that sounds as chaotic as its namesake building society is sensible (*'Bad decisions, running on dynamite/ Under pressure but it's alright'*).

THE GOOD-TIME SET
When only unbridled joie de vivre will do.

GHOST
Kaisarion
Opening with a gorgeous cascade of harmony guitars and the year's longest-held note, *Kaisarion* might be inspired by the rape and murder of ancient Alexandrian philosopher Hypatia, but Papa Emeritus and his Nameless Ghouls have never sounded so chipper.

THE HOT DAMN!
Live Laugh Love
'Bring out the tunes, bust out the moves/We'll have every motherfucker in this room!' yelps singer Gill Montgomery. And while The Hot Damn! only wrote this sugar-rock anthem as a piss-take of "those motivational signs that were popular in noughties kitchens", we feel sure you'll holler every word.

DIRTY HONEY
The Wire
With Angus-sized riffage setting up Marc LaBelle's honeyed shriek about a woman he just can't quit, *The Wire* peeled reticent Black Crowes fans away from the bar when Dirty Honey debuted this tune on last year's support shift. Finally released in the UK, it's a banger.

THE SHEEPDOGS
Find The Truth
Like Bad Company jamming with Thin Lizzy after six pints, these Canadians' optimistic single is the pace-setter for groove-led 2022 album *Outta Sight*. For an extra squeeze of happy juice, look up the hilarious, *Tron*-referencing video.

DERAPS
My Side Of Town
The wail of a police siren kicks off the Canadian-Australian power trio's crunching anthem, but there's no trouble here: Jacob Deraps's vocal is a celebration of the ladies and parties on his block, and is more *Paradise City* than *Welcome To The Jungle*.

THE MOON CITY MASTERS
Spinning Wheels
Served on a benevolent southern groove, the Steinberg brothers' best moment so far is engineered for slapping a sunburnt arm on the side of a Chevy. If the photogenic Brooklyn siblings can give us more like *Spinning Wheels* they'll be massive.

CREEPING JEAN
Fluorescent Orange Skies
While writing this country-twang modern classic the Brighton six-piece envisaged "driving on a coastal road with the top down and the sun setting", and later shot the bellissimo video in Italy. Summer's over, but the afterglow continues on the *Classic Rock* stereo.

THE BALLADS
Stirring sounds, cathartic moments.

TUK SMITH & THE RESTLESS HEARTS
Everybody Loves You When You're Dead
There's a hint of solo-era Lennon sat at a white piano as the Nashville band's best single starts up, and with Smith "struggling with the death of a friend" as he wrote it, this wistful highlight from *Ballad Of A Misspent Youth* carries a weight.

MASSIVE WAGONS
Please Stay Calm
As ever, frivolous festival bangers abound on the Lancaster rockers' new album *Triggered!*. But *Please Stay Calm* is something else: a mid-tempo, chime-riffed reflection, influenced by *Hysteria*-era Leppard and hinting that Baz Mills and co. can be deep, not just daft as a brush.

FANTASTIC NEGRITO
They Go Low
"When the one per cent are making their deals, we're not at the table, we're on the menu," Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz seethes of the inspiration behind this polemic from his album *White Jesus Black Problems*. The doomy verse captures his bile, but the chorus is righteous bliss.

Yelawolf

Tuk Smith

The Sheepdogs

Massive Wagons

Devin Townsend

THE LICKERISH QUARTET
Fortunately
Former Jellyfish members Roger Manning, Eric Dover and Tim Smith are in danger of eclipsing their former band with *Fortunately*, a soft-focus West Coast ballad that fuses all the soaraway hooks of pop with the brainiac musical mechanics of prog.

DEVIN TOWNSEND
Call Of The Void
"The concept is based around the 'call of the void' as an analogy for intrusive thoughts," says Townsend. This standout track from *Lightwork* is a head-clearing gust of synth-driven gorgeousness so sweet and stately it could soundtrack a coming-of-age movie.

YELAWOLF & SHOOTER JENNINGS
Rock & Roll Baby
With hip-hop motormouth Yelawolf turning his "compartmentalised energy" into a dark tale of hardship and fractured relationships, musical architect Jennings strived to create a "brooding, cinematic, dystopian journey". Listen out too for sound effects recorded at London Tube station Angel.

DAVID LONGDON
Love Is All
The posthumous *Door One* album from the late Big Big Train vocalist (who died in November last year after falling down the stairs of his Nottingham home) was always going to be a poignant listen. This delicate, waltzing standout is both devastating and a deserving finale.

THE ALT 'N' PROG STARS
Rock's finest enigmas and wondrous weirdos.

PORCUPINE TREE
Harridan
Now *this* is how you come back after a decade of keeping your fans guessing. *Harridan* kicks off with a bass solo as thick and gnarly as the roots of an ancient pine, blossoming into a deliciously twisty, earthy-ethereal hybrid that reminds us how much we'd missed the band.

VON HERTZEN BROTHERS
All Of A Sudden You're Gone
This lush, enveloping fusion of prog rock, pop and folky textures feels like proof of what Finland's Von Hertzens were always capable of (and for the most part hadn't *quite* nailed before). Dark yet pretty, and absolutely stunning. ▷

YELAWOLF: JESSE LIROLA; DEVIN TOWNSEND: PAUL HARRIES; MASSIVE WAGONS: DEAN CHALKLEY; THE SHEEPDOGS: MAT DUNLAP; TUK SMITH: ALYSSE GAFKJEN

MARILLION
Murder Machines

Following the politically charged fire of 2016's critically acclaimed *F.E.A.R*, this driving, dynamic highlight from *An Hour Before It's Dark* feels similarly resonant in the covid-blighted times we've seen these past couple of years.

KITTEN PYRAMID
Jalapeños

Pop-prog of the catchiest, most eccentric kind (i.e. the best kind, surely? Who the hell wants 'normal' pop-prog?) in the form of these Brit weirdos' ode to plant-based living. Strange yet oddly stirring, as guitars and brass crescendo into triumphant, rousing peaks.

CHURCH OF THE COSMIC SKULL
One More Step

Our friendly 21st-century cult pals continue to hypnotise us (in a good way) on this harmony-soaked, ELO-on-mushrooms slice from their excellent latest album *There Is No Time*. Join the Church. Resistance is futile.

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD
The Dripping Tap

Twelve years and approximately 12,000 albums into their career (they released *five* in 2022 alone), Melbourne's finest psych/pop/prog/rock freakniks make 18 minutes whizz by with this magic carpet ride of far-out tones and jabbing guitars and Technicolor fun.

THE SMASHING PUMPKINS
Beguiled

On *Beguiled* (the flagship single from this year's *Atun* album), Billy Corgan and co. strut a perfect line between angular and addictive, building a theatrical world on James Iha's deep, chugging beast of a guitar hook. There's no one quite like the Pumpkins.

THE ROOTSY ROCKERS
Southern, Americana and blues.

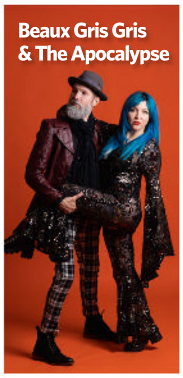
GOODBYE JUNE
See Where The Night Goes

The title track of Goodbye June's excellent 2022 album, *See Where The Night Goes* makes like a laid-back, swamp-dipped AC/DC having beers with Creedence Clearwater Revival – and yes, it is as juicy as that sounds. Deelicious.

THE COLD STARES
Nothing But The Blues

This ain't your daddy's blues… Well, it kind of is, but it's also way more fresh and fiery than the beige, plodding music that some imagine the blues to be (and, indeed, as it *can* be). This one's a groovy, stompy beefcake with a thrillingly feral heart, stemming from Chris Tapp's bearded-soul cries. Fuck yeah!

Mother Vulture


Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse

Dub War

Larkin Poe

Tyler Bryant

GINGER WILDHEART & THE SINNERS
Footprints In The Sand

Joined by his rootsy new family The Sinners, Ginger strikes a tender, gorgeously harmonised chord on this peak from their self-titled debut album. Less wild but full of heart, it has the sort of honest, confessional lyrics that will resonate with millions.

LARKIN POE
Georgia Off My Mind

The Lovell sisters absolutely nailed it on this slide guitar-infused humdinger. The old-school southern rock sway, soul and style is all there, and this time it's attached to a cracking tune that really sticks. *Now* they're really onto something.

WHISKEY MYERS
Feet's

One of the most gleefully toe-tapping numbers from the Texan rockers' stellar *Tornillo* album, *Feet's* stirs moreish riffs, slide licks, brass blasts and gospel harmonies into an almighty southern rock party hit. Rich, raucous and irresistible. Just add bourbon.

TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN
Bare Bones

This is one of our favourites from the Shakedown's bluesed up latest album *Shake The Roots* – something of a return-to-roots record for these Nashville-based hotshots. A fizzing, high-adrenalin whirl of bottleneck guitars and shuffling drum beats, it's old-school in the most youthful way possible.

MIKE CAMPBELL & THE DIRTY KNOBS
Electric Gypsy

Life after Tom Petty, while undoubtedly bittersweet, continues to reap lush sounds for former Heartbreaker Mike Campbell – part Dylan-esque gravel, part modern Americana strumming on this sweet, smart southern slice, with Campbell singing and playing his heart out.

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR
Just No Getting Over You (Dream Cruise)

A standout track from her latest album, the excellent *Nobody's Fool*, *Just No Getting Over You* finds JST blending funky sway with R&B strutting, a dash of pop and Bonnie Raitt-style vocal smoke. And a damn fine bluesed up guitar solo. Loose-limbed, upbeat and full of warm soul.

THE FIREBRANDS
Urgent, ferocious, fantastic.

HIS LORDSHIP
All Cranked Up

Now *this* is how to make an entrance. The first single from guitarist James Walbourne and drummer Kristoffer Sonne's new project, *All Cranked Up* spits like it's '76 in a subterranean punk club. As author John Niven says: "It makes The Cramps sound like yacht rock."

DUB WAR
Vibes In The Place

The third single from their first original album in a quarter of a century sees the Welsh fusion-metal pioneers explode back into contention. "The vibes in the place just hit the ceiling!" Benji Webbe hollers over a crackling groove.

MOTHER VULTURE
Honey

Written about "an abusive relationship where you're forced to become someone you're not," the Bristol rockers' knockout single catches both the suffocation and the catharsis of escape. They called it a "glimpse into the next era of the band", and we have high hopes.

THOSE DAMN CROWS
Man On Fire

Trailing next year's *Inhale/Exhale* album, *Man On Fire* is a buzzing, soaring indicator of the gigantic-scale modern rock anthems this Welsh quintet are capable of. Ace.

CROBOT
Electrified

Crobot's Brandon Yeagley dubs fourth album *Feel This* "the history of rock'n'roll as we see it", and admits that *Electrified* packs a little of the tearaway energy from Sabbath's *Neon Knights*. Hang on to the side of this track for dear life.

BEAUX GRIS GRIS & THE APOCALYPSE
Fill Me Up

The Anglo-American alt.bluesers described this year's *Good Times End Times* as a "dark party album", and *Fill Me Up* is the floor-filling centrepiece, coming on like Cream's go-faster *Crossroads* spliced with the beat of Sweet's *Ballroom Blitz*.

RIVAL SONS
Nobody Wants To Die

The Californians broke their three-year silence with this forerunner for seventh album *Darkfighter*. Written about "living your life knowing that the sword of Damocles is hanging over your head", this track travels at a thousand miles an hour, mortality be damned.

BEAUX GRIS GRIS & THE APOCALYPSE: ROB BLACKHAM; LARKIN POE: JASON STOLTZFUS

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CLASSIC ROCK

'BOYS WILL BE 'BOYS

Singer is sacked and guitarist takes the mic. Singer teams up with former band members. What's the hell's going on with the **Quireboys**?

Words: **Dave Ling**

Back in March there was disbelief among fans when it was announced that the Quireboys had sacked their frontman Spike and were continuing as a five-piece. How was that even possible, fans wondered. In some ways Spike *was* the Quireboys. He had co-founded the group in the mid-80s, and his sandpaper howl was an ever-present focal point of their gritty sound. But now, guitarist Guy Griffin had become also their lead vocalist. The group explained that the decision to drop Spike was "the culmination of not just months, but years of persistent problems" with the singer.

A response from Spike – who described himself as "the Quireboys founder, only original member and singer" – insisted that the name of the band belonged to him. That was disputed by the Griffin-fronted Quireboys as they set off on tour, and generated some warm reviews along the way.

Meanwhile, guitarist Guy Bailey, bassist Nigel Mogg, keyboard player Chris Johnstone and drummer Rudy Richman – all of whom had played with the Quireboys during their commercial heyday – threw in their lot with Spike, signing up for a one-off gig at London's Islington Academy on December 15.

Battle lines were well and truly drawn. Over two separate Zoom interviews, *Classic Rock* spoke first to Griffin, who replaced Ginger Wildheart in 1990, and fellow guitarist Paul Guerin, a fixture since 2001. A few days later we caught up with a couple of those in the opposing corner, Spike and Nigel Mogg.

Let's be clear from the outset, *Classic Rock* isn't backing either horse in this race. No band gambles its future by ditching their talismanic lead singer without good reason. Understandably, neither side wants to get into a game of 'he said, she said', although both parties agree that some fundamental points require explanation.

"If one single person is the Quireboys, let me know who they are and I'll send them all of the bills."

Guy Griffin

"Down the years there were a lot of situations that ultimately forced our hand to do this," Guerin begins. "You don't make up one morning and think: 'Here's a good idea'…"

"Yeah, let's potentially screw up our livelihood'," Griffin interjects. "But the reality was our livelihoods *were* being affected. Behind the scenes we found out a few things that broke the camel's back. This line-up of the band had been together for around twenty years, and if you were in the same boat as us, with someone trying to take away your livelihood, you'd do what we did."

Guerin explains that when an email from a promoter representing Spike's solo interests was "leaked" to his dismayed bandmates, insinuating that the Quireboys would no longer perform unplugged concerts, "that's when the avalanche began".

"In a single stroke, fifty per cent of our income had been wiped out," Griffin adds.

Although Spike says the band fired him by letter, Guerin insists that several warnings were issued: "We contacted him umpteen times with mediators; our manager flew in from Ibiza where he lives to sit down with him, but Spike didn't turn up. Obviously, shows are booked in advance; deposits are taken, flights are booked. What are we meant to do?"

The Quireboys already had a ready-made replacement for Spike. As pleasantly surprised concertgoers have observed, Guy Griffin is a fine singer.

"I had sung in a band called Glimmer that was signed to Atlantic," Griffin says. "My singing is an ongoing process. But all you've heard so far is [my interpretations of] the old songs. There are ten other albums since we did the first pair of albums [*A Bit Of What You Fancy* and *Bitter Sweet & Twisted*, released in 1990 and '93 respectively]. Don't forget I played on those two as well, and wrote some of the songs. Paul will tell you, I always sang on the demos and I did most of the soundchecks for the past twenty years."

Griffin has an accomplished voice, but is it a Quireboys voice?

"I take that on board to a certain extent," he says affably, "but this is a lot more complicated than who is or isn't the face of the Quireboys. If one single person is the Quireboys, let me know who they are and I'll send them all of the bills. If he [Spike] is the Quireboys, here's my credit card bill. A lot of harsh realities exist in the grown-up world, but some people just don't live in that place."

Since splitting with Spike, the Griffin-fronted Quireboys have toured America, appeared at the Monsters Of Rock Cruise and continued gigging across Europe. In September an Orchestral Quireboys show at London's Forum was shot for future broadcast on Amazon Prime. Being blunt, since the change, has anybody who bought a ticket asked for their money back? "Not so far as I'm aware," Griffin says with a shrug.

He sounds slightly flummoxed to hear that Spike has teamed up with "a lot of guys who haven't played together since 1993 and who are now going around proclaiming to be the originals". And it's a fair point.

"The situation around [ownership of] the name is what is it; whatever happens will happen," Griffin says. "But the reality

Above: the Spike-less, Guy Griffin-fronted Quireboys.

is that there's room for everyone to play their music. We're the ones that pay the bills [to keep the Quireboys going]. So yeah, he [Spike and company] can re-live the first album, let them have their nostalgia trip. We were probably becoming slightly bit bored of playing those songs."

"We are going to move on with new material," keyboard player Keith Weir says.

"Because of their popularity, we never really played songs outside of those first two albums, and that's something we'll explore," Guerin promises. "Spike just wouldn't learn them."

Griffin: "Now Spike can re-live his dream; he's back in 1989 again. I don't mean that in a bad way, he loves it there. But he has no right to tell us to stop. We are just too invested. The band is called the Quireboys, not the Quireboy."

The way that Spike tells it, the dispute was about the sheer number of concerts the band were playing, and also the size of the venues. "Exiting lockdown was our chance to start afresh," he points out. "Obviously they didn't like my plans."

Mogg: "The Quireboys is like a brand. When you build that up from the age of seventeen to twenty-four and then it goes down the pan a little bit, that's very sad. I mean, why do nine months of small shows per year when you could just do five big ones? When you've a chance to re-brand, to save things almost, you should accept that."

Having had several spells in and out of the Quireboys and as an armchair viewer of their ongoing soap opera, Mogg has a fairly unique viewpoint. "I don't agree with the way they went about it, but they [the band] have got to do their thing and do does Spike," he continues. "Though we [Spike's incarnation of the QBs] come from all over the planet, each of us thought it was wrong, and we came together to do something about it."

Was Spike sacked by mail?

"Hold on a minute," says Mogg. "The letter's there on Facebook."

"All I wanted was for the band to get back to where it should be," Spike interjects, sounding forlorn. "But this is a breath of fresh air for me. Now I get to move on."

Guerin and company are in the mixing stages of *The Band Rolls On…*, an appropriately titled collection of brand-new material, with cameos from Joe Elliott, Dan Reed, Rose Tattoo's Angry Anderson, Charlie Starr of Blackberry Smoke, Josh Todd and Stevie D from Buckcherry, and Chip Z'Nuff, among others.

Along with Mogg, Bailey, keyboard player Chris Johnstone and drummer Rudy Richman, Spike has already recorded a festive single, *Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year*, the proceeds from which will go to Care After Combat, a charity that supports former members of the British armed forces. "It's a subject close to my heart as several members of my family were in the military," the singer explains. "My grandad's on the cover."

Still in the spirit of nostalgia, Spike's Quireboys will reinstate the on-stage bar at their Islington Academy gig, allowing friends and kin to enjoy a tipple while the band play, a wheeze conceived at the band's peak. That's the plan, anyway. "The wood's in the shed, I just need to borrow a drill," Mogg quips. An album follows in the spring.

Spike intends to carry on, with previous members of the Quireboys.

"On the first day I sat down with Guy Bailey, the first time in years, we wrote five songs – and they're pure Quireboys, just the way we sound; good old British rock'n'roll."

With such steely determination from both sides of the fence, there will be no smiling reunion any time soon. So with a spirit of 'live and let live' co-existence just about confirmed by both parties, all we need to establish is what the two rivals would call themselves. It's a subject that neither side is prepared to address publicly.

"Despite the way they behaved I still love those guys."
Spike

"I believe it'll work itself out naturally," Griffin says. "In the meantime we're carrying on."

"I really don't want to dis anybody, but it's like a wrestling match – someone wins and someone loses," Mogg says. "We ain't going anywhere."

"These have been the weirdest few months of my entire life, and despite the way they behaved I still love those guys," sums up Spike. "But I'm so pleased to be back with Nigel and my pals that I'm *way* past all of what happened."

11 THINGS THAT MADE THE TAYLOR HAWKINS TRIBUTE SHOWS AMAZING

Rock royalty, bandmates and friends paying their respects, reunions taking place, Taylor's son Shane taking his late father's place behind the Foos... the shows delivered lasting memories.

Words: **Niall Doherty**

Geddy Lee

Alex Lifeson

Paul McCartney

Well in hindsight, *of course* they weren't going to let him go quietly. Such was the shock of Taylor Hawkins's tragic death at the end of March that everyone's immediate reaction was on the same disbelieving page: hushed reverence at the passing of one of rock's much-loved characters, stunned words of admiration for someone no one could get used to talking about in the past tense.

But Foo Fighters knew that's not how they could leave it and, after a period of mourning, they rallied to stage two of the most glorious send-offs ever witnessed in music. First at Wembley Stadium in early September, then at LA's Kia Forum a few weeks later, Dave Grohl and co. were joined by star guests to give their dynamo drummer the farewell he deserved.

Here are 11 reasons why those shows will live long in the memory:

Legends Came Out In Force

Rock legends are busy people. It's probably really annoying being best mates with one of them and trying to organise a pint. But when it came to these gigs, they made sure they were there. What a line-up it was: Brian Johnson, Queen, Lars Ulrich, Nikki Sixx, Def Leppard, Nancy Wilson, Geezer Butler, Geddy Lee, Sebastian Bach and many more. If someone stuck up the CCTV footage from backstage on YouTube, it would easily be the best music documentary of 2023.

Liam Gallagher Got Wembley Off To A Flyer

Taylor had long been vocal about where he stood when it came to the feuding Gallagher brothers – he was with Liam, enamoured by how he could "fucking sing a rock'n'roll song". Performing with the remaining Foos, with Grohl on drums, Liam kicked off the Wembley leg with a raucous *Rock'n'Roll Star*, exactly the sort of swaggering, attitude-heavy opener you imagine Taylor would approve of.

Queen Returned To The Scene Of Their Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert

Brian May and Roger Taylor performed a five-song set at both legs, but it was their appearance at Wembley Stadium, where they were joined by guests including The Darkness's Justin Hawkins, The Struts' Luke Spiller and Eurovision star Sam Ryder, that felt extra poignant. It was just over 30 years ago that they staged their own star-studded tribute to a fallen bandmate in this very venue. If anyone knew what the Foos were going through on the day, it was them.

The Rush Reunion We Thought Would Never Happen Did

Similarly, Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson got to pay tribute to their own departed hero after the death of Rush drummer Neil Peart in 2020. Lifeson claimed only last year that without Peart there could be no Rush, so there was a sense of meaning and warmth that he and Geddy Lee could find a way, playing a storming three-song set at both shows, with Grohl, Chad Smith, Danny Carey and Omar Hakim filling in ably for Peart.

A Beatles Song Had Its Live Debut By Macca

In the same year as the *Get Back* documentary coming out, it would've taken something special for noteworthy Beatles news. Something special was when Paul McCartney joined the remaining Foos, plus Chrissie Hynde, for his first ever live performance of the *Abbey Road* song *Oh! Darling*.

Wolfgang Van Halen Got To Say Goodbye To His Dad

Wolfgang Van Halen finally got the closure he'd been looking for after the death of his dad Eddie. The tumultuous relationships within Van Halen had denied him the chance to stage his own tribute, but here

GEDDY LEE: KEVIN MAZUR; ALEX LIFESON: © SCARLET PAGE; PAUL MCCARTNEY: DANNY CLINCH

Brian May

he got it, performing sizzling renditions of *On Fire* and *Hot For Teacher* alongside Grohl, Justin Hawkins and Josh Freece.

Dave Grohl Was At His Unstoppable Best

Anyone who's been to a Foos gig knows that Grohl has huge stamina. Jumping from song to song, line-up to line-up, frontman to drummer and back again with unrelenting exuberance, he was the ringleader and heartbeat of both shows.

The Return Of Them Crooked Vultures

This wasn't how anyone wanted Grohl, Josh Homme and John Paul Jones to reconvene, but the trio's reunion made for a stunning centrepiece to the gigs. Their short, three-song set saw their own *Gunman* sandwiched by Queens Of The Stone Age's *Long Slow Goodbye* and a swirling cover of Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*.

The Kids Led The Way

One of the biggest takeaways from both shows was how they felt hopeful and uplifting, rather than downbeat, and that was due to the youthful spirit brought in by the younger performers. There was Dave Grohl's daughter Violet taking centre-stage for two stirring Jeff Buckley covers, and Ipswich 12-year-old Nandi Bushell added an exuberant energy when she came on to play with the Foos for *Learn To Fly*.

When it came to adolescent drummers, though, there was a standout winner…

Shane Hawkins Was Everyone's Hero

What a pair of emotional days it must have been for Taylor's teenage son Shane, and how his dad would have been immensely proud when Shane performed expertly with the Foos on an epic *My Hero* at both shows, adding his muscular, loose-limbed expertise to *I'll Stick Around* at the US show.

That Foo Fighters Set

Backed by drummers including Matt Cameron, Brad Wilk, Chad Smith and more, it was only right that the shows ended with a mini-headline set from Foo Fighters, and *Everlong* sent a deeply moved crowd off into the night. Who knows if we'll see them again. If this was the Foos' last show, it was a hell of a way to bow out.

Wolfgang Van Halen and Justin Hawkins

Dave Grohl

BRIAN MAY + WOLFGANG VAN HALEN & JUSTIN HAWKINS: KEVIN MAZUR; DAVE GROHL: © SCARLET PAGE

2022 THE ULTIMATE REVIEW

IN MEMORIAM

Here's to the rock'n'rollers, among them musicians, producers, songwriters and others in the music industry, who sadly left us in 2022. Thank you, and goodnight.

BURKE SHELLEY
April 10, 1950 – January 10
Bassist/vocalist with Budgie.

BOBBY HARRISON
June 22, 1939 – January 7
Member of the bands Procol Harum, SNAFU and Freedom.

MICHAEL LANG
December 11, 1944 – January 8
Co-creator of the original Woodstock festival.

GREG WEBSTER
January 4, 1938 – January 14, 1938
Original drummer with the Ohio Players.

RACHEL NAGY
December 15, 1984 – January 16
Singer with American garage-rockers Detroit Cobras.

DON WILSON
February 10, 1933 – January 22
Co-founder of surf-rockers The Ventures.

ANDY ROSS
January 31, 1956 – January 25
Boss of indie label Food Records.

KIT WOOLVEN
December 21, 1950 – January 26
Popular-music producer.

DIXIE LEE
Died January 27
Former drummer with Lone Star.

SAM LAY
March 20, 1935 – January 29
Drummer with the Butterfield Blues Band.

HARGUS 'PIG' ROBBINS
January 18, 1938 – January 30
Session pianist to the stars.

JIMMY JOHNSON
November 25, 1928 – January 31
Chicago blues master.

RONNIE SPECTOR
August 10, 1943 – January 12
Singer and co-founder of The Ronettes/bad girl of rock'n'roll.

JON ZAZULA
March 16, 1952 – February 1
American music industry executive and founder of Megaforce Records.

WILLIE LEACOX
March 31, 1947 – Februar 2
Former drummer with American soft-rockers America.

IAN McDONALD
June 25, 1946 – February 9
Multi-instrumentalist co-founder of King Crimson and Foreigner.

BETTY DAVIS
July 26, 1945 – February 9
The godmother of funk.

KING LOUIE BANKSTON
Died February 13
Guitarist with American power-poppers the Exploding Hearts.

'BIG' JOHN HARTE
November 15, 1951 – February 11
Bodyguard to the stars.

SANDY NELSON
December 1, 1938 – February 14
Influential American drummer.

ROGER 'RAGS' SEGAL
Died February 14
Bassist with Trashlight Vision and Sorry And The Sinatras.

GEOFF BEAVAN
January 24, 1953 – February 14
Bass player with alt.rockers Diesel Park West.

TONY MATUZAK
November 18, 1961 – February 17
Former guitarist with American shock-rockers Lizzy Borden.

DEREK 'THE DRAW' HUSSEY
Died February 18
Post-Ian Dury frontman with The Blockheads.

GARY BROOKER
May 29, 1945 – February 19
Singer and pianist with Procol Harum.

PETE McCLANAHAN
Died February 19
Original bassist with Warrior Soul.

DON CRAINE
March 29, 1945 – February 24
Frontman with blues band the Downliners Sect.

NICK TESCO
October 3, 1954 – February 25
Co-founder and vocalist with UK punks The Members.

GAVIN MARTIN
Died March 10
Writer for *NME*, *Daily Mirror*, *Classic Rock* and more, co-founder of fanzine *Alternative Ulster*.

IAN EYRE
Died March 10
Former bassist with Curved Air.

BARRY BAILEY
June 12, 1948 – March 12
Guitarist with southern rockers Atlanta Rhythm Section.

NOEL E MONK
Died April
Former manager of Van Halen, and tour manager for the Sex Pistols.

JORDAN MOONEY
June 23, 1955 – April 3
Early icon of London punk subculture.

JOE MESSINA
December 13, 1928 – April 4
Guitarist with Tamla Motown house band the Funk Brothers.

CHRIS ALEXANDER
March 9, 1964 – April 6
Promoter of concerts at London's (now long-gone) Astoria.

MEAT LOAF
September 27, 1947 – January 20
Singer, actor and entertainer – with a capital 'E'.

JOEY C JONES
Died March 15
Frontman with the American incarnation of Sweet Savage.

CHRIS ELLIS
Died March 21
Early bassist with British hard rockers Demon.

LARRY KESSLER
Died March 24
Founding member of NYC avant-garde band The Godz.

TAYLOR HAWKINS
February 17, 1972 – March 25
Drummer with Foo Fighters and for Alanis Morissette.

JIM KARSTEIN
Died March 27
Drummer for Eric Clapton, JJ Cale and others.

CHRIS BAILEY
November 29, 1956 – April 9
Singer with Aussie punks The Saints.

SYLVIA LANCASTER
Died April 12
The campaigning mother of Sophie.

RICK PALIN
Died April 14
UK-based music publicist.

RE STYLES
March 3, 1950 – April 17
Former backing vocalist with The Tubes.

GUITAR SHORTY
September 8, 1934 – April 20
American blues guitarist.

CYNTHIA PLASTER CASTER
May 24, 1947 – April 21
Maker of casts of rock stars' penises.

GETTY x3

KLAUS SCHULZE
August 4, 1947 – April 26
Electronic music pioneer and early member of Tangerine Dream.

RAY FENWICK
July 18, 1946 – April 30
Guitarist with the Ian Gillan Band.

GABE SERBIAN
May 1, 1977 – April 30
Drummer with The Locust.

RANDY RAND
Died late April
Bassist with American hard rockers Autograph.

GUILLAUME BIDEAU
May 12, 1978 – May
Vocalist with French metalheads Mnemic.

RIC PARNELL
August 13, 1951 – May 1
Drummer with Spinal Tap.

ROLAND HYAMS
December 31, 1958 – May 3
Much-loved British music publicist.

HOWIE PYRO
June 28, 1960 – May 4
Bassist with Johnny Thunders, The Misfits and more.

NORMAN DOLPH
May 11, 1938 – May 11
Early producer of the Velvet Underground.

ANDY FLETCHER
July 8, 1961 – May 26
Keyboard player with Depeche Mode.

RONNIE HAWKINS
January 10, 1935 – May 29
Noted US rockabilly and rock'n'roll singer-songwriter.

STEVE BROUGHTON
May 20, 1950 – May 29
Drummer with the Edgar Broughton Band.

HENRIK 'HEMPO' HILDÉN
June 17, 1952 – May 30
Drummer with several Scandinavian rock acts.

KEN KELLY
May 19, 1946 – June 3
Sleeve artist for Kiss, Rainbow and Manowar.

ALEC JOHN SUCH
November 14, 1951 – June 5
Co-founder and former bassist with Bon Jovi.

JIM SEALS
October 17, 1942 – June 6
Half of American soft-rock duo Seals & Crofts.

BRETT TUGGLE
September 23, 1951 – June 19
Keyboard player for artists including David Lee Roth and Fleetwood Mac.

MARK LANEGAN
November 25, 1964 – February 22
Singer with Screaming Trees and QOTSA and solo artist.

TREVOR STRNAD
May 3, 1981 – May 11
Vocalist with American metallers the Black Dahlia Murder.

RICKY GARDINER
August 31, 1948 – May 13
Guitarist with Scottish progressive rock band Beggars Opera.

VANGELIS
March 29, 1943 – May 17
Greek composer and musician.

RICK PRICE
June 10, 1944 – May 17
Bassist with British pop bands The Move and Wizzard.

CATHAL COUGHLAN
December 16, 1960 – May 18
Frontman with Irish indie acts Microdisney and The Fatima Mansions.

KENNY COX
January 10, 1952 – June 21
Former guitarist with More and Mammoth.

MASSIMO MORANTE
October 6, 1952 – June 23
Guitarist with Italian progressives Goblin.

MANNY CHARLTON
July 25, 1941 – July 5
Co-founder and former guitarist with Nazareth, producer and solo artist.

BARBARA THOMPSON
July 27, 1944 – July 9
Former saxophonist with Colosseum.

MICHAEL JAMES JACKSON
Died July 14
Producer of several Kiss albums.

ROBBY BOEBEL
June 30, 1952 – July 14
Guitarist with German hard rockers Frontline.

PAUL RYDER
April 24 – July 15
Bassist with The Happy Mondays.

MICHAEL HENDERSON
July 7, 1951 – July 19
Bassist for Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder and more.

COL HARKNESS
September 20, 1959 – July 22
Former singer and rhythm guitarist with British boogie-heads Spider.

MIKE PELA
January 13, 1950 – July 23
British record producer and mixer.

ROBERT MONROE HEATHCOTE
May 27, 1964 – July 24
Former bassist with Suicidal Tendencies.

SANDY ROBERTON
July 7, 1942 – July 25
Artist, producer and manager.

TOM SPRINGFIELD
July 2, 1934 – July 27
Member of The Springfields and writer of many of The Seekers' hits.

JIM SOHNS
Died July 29
Singer with American garage-rockers the Shadows Of Knight.

MO OSTIN
March 27, 1927 – July 31
Iconic record industry executive.

NICKY MOORE
June 21, 1947 – August 3
Frontman with NWOBHM band Samson.

RAY MAJORS
Died August 4
Guitarist with Mott and British Lions.

SANDY DILLON
Died August 4
American singer-songwriter.

JUDITH DURHAM
July 3, 1943 – August 5
Lead singer with folk-meets-pop act The Seekers.

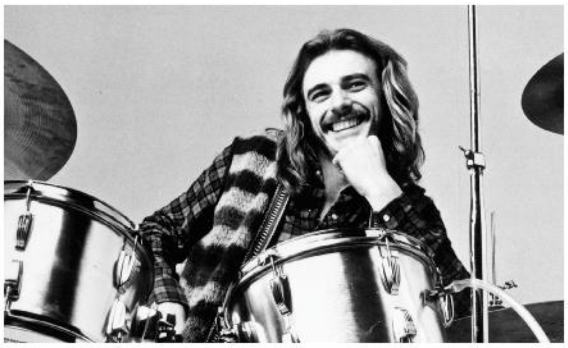
DAVID MUSE
July 27, 1949 – August 6
Multi-instrumentalist with American soft-rockers Firefall.

LAMONT DOZIER
June 16, 1941 – August 8
Famed American songwriter, producer and singer.

DARRYL HUNT
May 4, 1950 – August 8
Long-time bassist with The Pogues.

OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN
26 September 1948 – 8 August
Iconic pop singer.

BILL PITMAN
February 12, 1920 – August 11
American session guitarist.



ALAN WHITE
June 14, 1949 – May 26
Drummer with Yes, John Lennon and more.

STEVE GRIMMETT
August 19, 1959 – August 15
Singer with Grim Reaper, Onslaught and Lionsheart.

TED KIRKPATRICK
May 22, 1960 – August 19
Drummer with prog-thrashers Tourniquet.

STUART ANSTIS
May 2, 1974 – August 21
Former guitarist with Cradle Of Filth.

ERIC BOUILLETTE
June 29, 1967 – August 21
Guitarist with prog-rockers The Room.

JERRY ALLISON
August 31, 1939 – August 22
Drummer with Buddy Holly & The Crickets.

KIMMO BLOM
January 31, 1970 – August 25
Frontman with several notable Finnish bands.

JOHN TILL
December 24, 1945 – September 4
Guitarist with Joplin's group the Full Tilt Boogie Band.

DAVE SHERMAN
Died September 6
Bassist with Spirit Caravan, The Obsessed and more.

'CLUTCH' CARRUTHERS
April 20, 1962 – September 9
Singer with NWOBHM band Tysondog.

RAMSEY LEWIS
May 27, 1935 – September 12
Grammy-winning jazz pianist.

DAVID ANDERSSON
Died September 14
Guitarist with Night Flight Orchestra and Soilwork.

PAUL SARTIN
Died September 14
Singer and violinist with folk act Bellowhead.

RAY EDENTON
November 3, 1926 – September 21
Noted American session guitarist.

GORD 'PILEDRIVER' KIRCHIN
September 23, 1961 – September 22
Leader of Canadian metalheads Piledriver.

DAVID MALACHOWSKI
January 16, 1955 – September 29
Guitarist with American prog-rockers Pavlov's Dog.

LORETTA LYNN
April 14, 1932 – October 4
Country-rock icon.

STEVE 'ZE SUICIDE' ROBERTS
Died October 13
Former drummer with British punks UK Subs.

NOEL DUGGAN
January 23, 1949 – October 15
Co-founder of Clannad.

Apologies to the families and friends of those we didn't have space to include.

DRUMMIE ZEB
September 24, 1959 – September 2, 2022
Drummer and singer with reggae band Aswad.

GETTY x2; DRUMMIE ZEB: KEVIN NIXON

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P90
Jimi Hendrix
Eightieth-birthday-celebration book tells "a tale of pure genius".

The Hard Stuff
The Ultimate Rock Reviews Section

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- ■■■■■■■ Good
- ■■■■■■ Above Average
- ■■■■■ Average
- ■■■■ Below Par
- ■■■ A Disappointment
- ■■ Pants
- ■ Pish

Ingredients

P80 Albums
P86 Reissues
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Neil Young With Crazy Horse

World Record REPRISE

Late-career creative burst proves there's life yet in this thankfully still growling old dog.

Which Neil Young will grace us today? The 2022 version recasts him as *The Fast Show's* Dave Angel: Eco Warrior. Focusing on climate change, war and a broken relationship with his once beloved cars, *World Record* is Young reminding us that the planet is in trouble. It's less trite than that sounds, although he'll probably regret hollering *'no more war; only love'* on *Walkin' On The Road (To The Future)*.

Never unafraid to unleash chaos, Young has been muddying his own waters of late with *Noise & Flowers*, *Toast* and *Homegrown* – previously unreleased albums from the past – but in simple terms *World Record* is the successor to last year's Crazy Horse collaboration *Barn*. A certain striving for 'authenticity' remains. As a result, Young, Nils Lofgren, Billy Talbot and Ralph Molina recorded live to analogue tape, and there's some contrived between-song hiss if you listen closely. It doesn't matter. *World Record* never sounds tossed off, and you'd suspect a producer as diligent as Rick Rubin would have rolled his eyes and got on with making a terrific record.

Musically the album is all over the place without misplacing the 'Quality Control' button, and that's what makes it so strong and so engaging. Thus, *Love Earth* begins its journey in *American Stars & Bars* fashion until, apropos of absolutely nothing, a whopping Glitter stomp rudely interrupts the serenity. It's fantastic.

And before you can say 'like a hurricane', Young is at his best when he's at his most ruefully wheezy, hence the folk-rap of *The World (Is In Trouble Now)* and the affecting near-nursery rhyme *The Long Day Before*, where Crazy Horse add atypically serene, gospel-tinged harmonies. Yes, Young is cross, but he's elegiac too, and when piano and steel guitar lead *This Old Planet (Changing Days)* he's even sweet-natured.

There's heft on the record too, though. The ferocious 15-minute *Chevrolet* feels like a real turning over of the temple tables. A turbo-charged, mostly instrumental guitar attack that wouldn't have sounded out of place on *Weld*, it finds Young lamenting the passing of the car as a viable form of transport *'on the dusty lanes of this old highway'*.

We already knew there was life yet in this prolific old dog, of course. What perhaps we didn't quite grasp was that even in the late autumn of his career, Neil Young can turn in something as vital and musically catholic as *World Record*. We're so lucky to have him.

John Aizlewood

Mick's Jaguar

Salvation TEE PEE/TOTEM CAT

NY rockers return with more street-fighting anthems.

Mick's Jaguar (holy shit, I just got it!) is as NYC as rock'n'roll gets. They play dirty, downtown, Kooler-than-Jesus black-leather sleaze rawk, and they do it with such casual authority that you'd think they were all proud members of the Genzale clan.

It's been four long years since MJ's scorching debut *Fame And Fortune*. No idea what they've been doing all that time, but all-killer ripper *Salvation* was worth the wait. Filled with ruthless bang-tangos like snotty riffer *Man Down* and strutting sleaze anthem *Molotov Children*, it's like the street-punk record Kiss never wrote. *Free On The Street* has a slinky Rose Tattoo-meets-ARE Weapons vibe (it could happen), *5 AM* is booth-stomping glam, *Speed Dealer* is pure, reckless belligerence, *Hell's Gate* is a bloozy, evil creepy-crawler… I mean, you're not dumb, you get the idea. It's Guns N' Roses if they never lost their street cred. It's Hanoi Rocks if one of 'em stabbed a guy on the Bowery. It's the Stones if the Stones were 23 forever. It's hot stuff, man.

Sleazegrinder

M.U.T.T.

Bad To The Bone QUIET PANIC

Former Culture Abuse men move forwards by venturing backwards.

San Francisco's Culture Abuse were shaping up brilliantly; 2018's second album *Bay Dream* was a fully carbonated delight, a Weezer-shaped confluence of punk snarl and pop nous. But bad behaviour caught up with the band, and accountability did for them.

Now the three members of the band who weren't the wrong 'un (John Jr, Shane Plitt and Matt Walker) plus Dead To Me drummer Isa Knife have a new project. And while there are some nice moments – the Buzzcocky guitar lines that punctuate *Born To Raise Hell*, and, um, the Buzzcocky guitar lines that punctuate *High With You* – there's nothing that threatens to pick up the giddy momentum of their old band and head skywards with it. Instead they've made a perfectly serviceable, old-school Californian punk album. It's short (nine tracks in just over 17 minutes), and it thrashes convincingly, but it's not an album with its eyes on the horizon.

Fraser Lewry

Press Club

Endless Motion HASSLE

A selection of grand delights from down under.

There are few greater musical joys than finding a band that doesn't really fit in alongside anyone else. Melbourne's Press Club are one of those groups. They're spiky and fizzing with attitude, but they're too musically tight to be strictly punk; they have killer melodies but are not remotely pop; the guitars gleam and bass lines strut, but they're a world away from trad classic rock. They're just *them*, coated in a fine dust of indie-rock sparkle, but basically a little standalone island of awesomeness inviting you to come ashore on their own terms.

Frontwoman Natalie Foster is a natural-born star, her vocals soaked in uncompromising emotion and moulded around a core of strong Aussie vowels telling timeless tales of everyday life and very modern challenges. But the grit of the lyrics – often introspective, fearful and furious – is balanced by the raw beauty of the music surrounding it.

Get on board with Press Club, there's something special being built here.

Emma Johnston

The Black Halos

How The Darkness Doubled STOMP

Canadian punks still fighting the good fight.

You can't fault the Black Halos for flying their punk-rock flag high. Still beholden to rebellion and pouring scorn on the straight world with all the disgust that it deserves, the Canadian band continue to hold out against power, corruption and lies.

As ever with The Black Halos, line-up changes abound, although the core of vocalist Billy Hopeless and Rich Jones remains in place. From the new line-up comes a polished, fizzing production that brings the guitars to the fore. The band set out their stall from the off. *History Of Violence* pulls no punches with a wall of guitars

that back Hopeless's sneered vocals, before delivering the kind of towering chorus that's designed for air-punching and terrace chanting. Likewise the detonations that are *Uncommonwealth* and *Better Days*.

Alas, hamstrung by the band's one-paced approach, the tracks on *How The Darkness Doubled* eventually blend into one before the album's out.

Julian Marszalek

Nothing More

Spirits BETTER NOISE MUSIC

First album for five years tries to get inside our heads – successfully.

When a band say they're asking their fans to take a psychometric "Spirits Test" to determine their "spirit type", you get the whiff of marketing bullshit in your nostrils. But even if this Texan quartet may be keen to see which style gains traction on this sixth album, they dabble in everything from emo yearning to nu metal to stadium-rock singalongs with equal conviction, inviting cynics to take a walk.

Recent single *Tired Of Winning* suggests Jonny Hawkins's breathless vocal delivery and the rhythm section's rib-bruising attack has gained a new urgency during a covid-lengthened break from the studio since 2017, and that impression is reinforced on furious bangers such as *The Other F Word* and *Turn It Up Like*. On *Best Times* and the determinedly optimistic *Dream With Me* the lyrical themes explored lean towards the idea of seizing the day and grabbing life by the cojones. Positive energy like this is hard to resist.

Johnny Sharp

Dead Meadow

Force Form Free BLUES FUNERAL

Shoe-facing stoners hone a seductive formula.

Blending shoegaze, slowcore, stoner rock and generous swathes of Sabbathian doom might sound simple, but it's hard to put a distinctive stamp on such a melting pot of well-worn alt.rock styles.

This Washington DC trio ain't new to this, and the opening track of their eighth album, *The Left Hand*, bewitches the listener with the most beautiful, mournful yawn of a central riff. Elsewhere, the title track's gloomy banks of fuzz are haunted by ghostly whistles of wind, and *The Lure Of The Next Peak* takes a beguiling left turn, resembling a road-not-taken from an Air session, full of wobbly vintage synth noodles and somnambulant psychedelic meandering. There aren't even any vocals until the second half, as if Dead Meadow don't really wake up until the afternoon, but they've already made their mark by the time a Jason Pierce-style love-lorn groan hovers over an entrancing keyboard motif on *Binah 1644*.

Weary, woeful, but frequently wonderful stuff.

Johnny Sharp

Spear Of Destiny

Ghost Population EASTERSNOW

Destiny unknown.

Bafflingly, they've never been serious candidates for rehabilitation, but Spear Of Destiny deserve reconsideration. Under the radar, leader Kirk Brandon is on a songwriting roll, and *Ghost Population* is a startling reminder of just what a fulfilling talent he can be. With a sound as rich as the band's Epic/Virgin labels days, Brandon can still craft massive anthems such as *Neolythic By Design*, with its Theatre Of Hate-style spaghetti-western touches; the threatening *Waster*; the *Never Take Me Alive*-style strum of *Wreck;* and the clangsome call-to-arms that is standout *Shine*. *Ballard Of The Dog* is the closest they've come to a sea shanty; *Pilgrim* is about Brandon's mother; *Forever Their England* – written in '86 but, unfathomably, unrecorded until now – concludes proceedings in deliriously epic fashion.

On this evidence, Brandon deserves better than a major-label afterlife of small sales and small venues. It really is our loss.

John Aizlewood

Kitten Pyramid

Kiddo FLIPFLOP

Befuddling East Staffordshire pro-vegetarian concept prog is the new black.

Of all the great concept albums about the environmental impact of eating meat, this third release from Burton-on-Trent prog misfits Kitten Pyramid might just be the most bewildering. *Kiddo* has so many surprise twists, it's entirely possible that many listeners will be reaching for the travel-sickness pills by the time album centrepiece *Whale* hoves into view. It's that discombobulating.

It's also very good. Inhabiting an imaginative realm where Cardiacs-meet-Super Furry Animals-meets-*The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*-meets-Vivian Stanshall via Paddy McAloon's *I Trawl The Megahertz*, it boggles, it wobbles, it frequently squelches, and on *BBC* the melody from Cream's *Sunshine Of Your Love* is used to backbone a lyric about a '*cheeky chihuahua*'. Meanwhile, *Jalapeños* sounds like Foo Fighters jamming with The Polyphonic Spree, and *Biscuits* is Blur but with added seagulls. You could listen to this album for 150 years and still be hearing new things.

Fraser Lewry

Black Rain

Untamed STEAMHAMMER/SPV

French hard rockers unleashed.

Having been seeking their ideal sound for the past 10 years or so, Black Rain claim at last to be satisfied with the intense sonics of album number seven – and, it has to be said, it absolutely slams. The shift in gear is down to their work with Hannes Braun, frontman with touring buddies Kissin' Dynamite, who engineered and produced the dozen tracks and has helped shape a new level of aggression and power. The likes of the title track and *Blade Of Love* are immense, while *Set The World On Fire* finds frontman Swan Hellion channelling his inner Alice Cooper. At no point on the record does it feel like the band are compromising; the songs are allowed to build naturally, and even the punchy singles – *Summer Jesus, Neon Drift* and *Kiss The Sky* – are dramatic epics. More studio collaboration with Braun is surely the way forward.

Essi Berelian

ROUND-UP: SLEAZE

By Sleazegrinder

Communication Killer: taking you back to the rougher stuff of the 90s.

Communication Killer

Dirty Rock Explosion

SELF-RELEASED

Austrian dead-enders with a Stooges fixation and a blistering garage-punk attack, this is the kinda band you always hope to discover when you stumble into some sketchy dive-bar on the darkest side of town. They claim to play the "dirtiest rock since 2013". And while I don't remember what happened back then, I will tell you they're contenders for Kings Of Sleaze right now. *Knock, Knock On My Coffin (Coffin Rock)* sounds like Iggy fronting The Fluid, for Chrissakes, *At The Flix* is a sweat-soaked assault of pummelling distortion, *Just A Game* is six solid minutes of teenage-rampage action-rock, and *Queen Of The Tomb 2020* sounds exactly like a song with that title should.

Communication Killer cover a lot of ground on this record, from Sabbathy Seattle gunk to high-flying Scandinavian guitar heroism. If you miss the rougher sounds and smells of the 90s, get in on this.

Souls Of Hades

All The Filthy Ones

SELF-RELEASED

So there's a song on here, *Glenn Danzig Sold Me Weed*, that goes '*Glenn Danzig sold me weed/He didn't want no money, he just wanted my skull.*' If that's not the line of the year, I dunno what is. Anyway, these guys are from New Zealand and they sound like Venom if Cronos was Lemmy. So obviously, it's a winner.

Rifle

Repossessed SELF-RELEASED

Slow-rolling ghetto thunder from Peru. Borrowing the sly-eyed swagger and ear-slugging distortion of proto-metal juggernauts like Flower Travelin' Band and Josefus, this record is druggy, cult-y street doom that reeks of greasy moustaches and scraped resin. Fire up whatever machine you've got and take this one for a long, hard ride.

Crimeline

Animal SELF-RELEASED

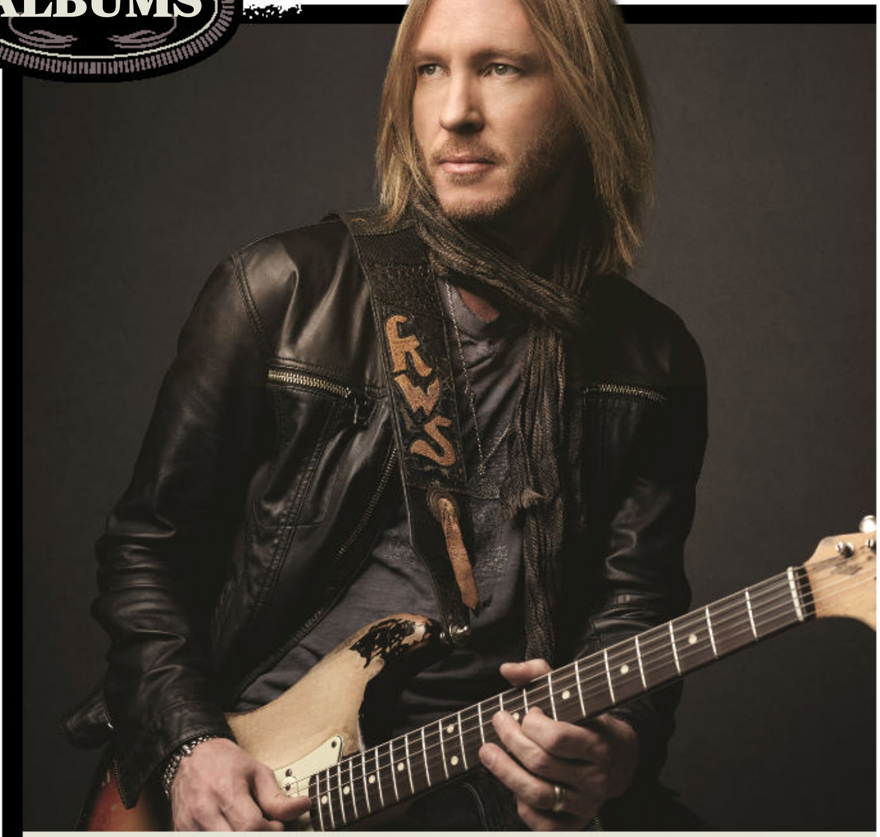
Supremely sleazy and raucous, Virginia's Crimeline waste no time here on getting down to business. Opener *Big City Slams* is all Dead Boys swagger and Candy Snatchers ferocity, and every track just gets harder and nastier as it rolls along. If I lived in Norfolk they'd be my best friends and I'd already be dead by misadventure three months ago. Total jammer.

Hawk Sally

Dave Messed Up SELF-RELEASED

Entertainingly gonzo waste-oid rock from Beijing. Under the layers of tattered garage savagery is authentically catchy rock'n'roll – check out the positively charming power-pop of *Friday, Saturday And Sunday* for a sparkling example – but it's all fired from an out-of-control cannon of sputtering guitar skronks and fists-on-trashcans drums. Love it.

The Hard Stuff — Albums



Kenny Wayne Shepherd

Trouble Is... 25 PROVOGUE

Remake of blueser's second album perhaps sticks too close to the original.

Kenny Wayne Shepherd's second album *Trouble Is*, released in 1998, set up his career as a blues guitarist. His first, *Ledbetter Heights*, three years earlier, had laid out the territory – Texas blues, Louisiana blues, acoustic blues, electric blues – with a high-voltage performance and sold half a million copies. Not bad going for a style that was generally considered to be worn out by the mid-90s.

Trouble Is took the energy of *Ledbetter Heights* and ran with it, learning as it did so, earning a Grammy nomination and going platinum. Shepherd's guitar sound was cleaner. His solos, while still in thrall to the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Hendrix, Clapton, the three Kings (Albert, BB and Freddie), and Duane Allman, were more nuanced. The songs were better too, particularly the smoky *Blue On Black* and the heavy opening duo of *Slow Ride* and *True Lies* coming at you with a contemporary slant.

The two covers – Bob Dylan's *Everything Is Broken* and Jimi Hendrix's *I Don't Live Today* – added their own pizzazz. The standard never falters either; the passion that drives *Chase The Rainbow* just before the closing instrumental title track is enough to send you back to the beginning.

Naturally, the blues anoraks weren't having it, refusing to believe that one so young (Shepherd was still a teenager when he started recording the album) could possibly play the blues. Bollocks. They also whinged about his voice – without bothering to check that he wasn't actually singing (then, as now, lead vocals were handled by long-time collaborator Noah Hunt).

Shepherd's decision to re-record the album 25 years on is a bold one. He has reassembled the entire cast, with one exception, although the studio where the original was done, the Record Plant, is now closed. The reproduction sounds better, brighter, although how much of that is down to technology is hard to tell. There is also an additional track, another Dylan cover, *Ballad Of A Thin Man*, that was left off the original.

Shepherd has followed the original arrangements closely, perhaps too closely. You have to pay close attention to notice the changes. He might have done better to record a live album from the current 25th-anniversary tour and shown how the songs have developed over time. Having said that, if you haven't got this album, this remake is the version to get.

Hugh Fielder

Dr. Feelgood

Damn Right! PROPER

They does it right.

That name... To be frank, it's always going to conjure images of an entirely different band. Wilko, Figure, Lee, Sparko: that's Dr. Feelgood. At least that was Dr. Feelgood for the first six years of their existence. Next year, three-quarters of today's Feelgoods (Phil Mitchell – bass, Kevin Morris – drums, Gordon Russell – guitar) will have been members of the band, off and on, for four decades. Incongruously Mackem vocalist Robert Kane has been on the Brilleaux for 23 years. Yet wherever they go there's always some purist smart-arse playing the "Yes, but..." card. They really ought to have changed their name. That said, I'm not the one trying to book their gigs.

Following an extended (17-year) studio lay-off, *Damn Right!*, the quartet's first album of all-original (Kane/Russell) material, finds a combo in rare form. From the fat, rockabilly twang of *Don't Pull Your Punches*, through the raw, Thames Delta lope of *Put The Blame On Me*, to the heavy-lidded, harmonica-laced R&B moodiness of the bang-on-concept *I Need A Doctor*, *Damn Right!* is exactly the sort of record that Lee Brilleaux would be making were he still with us, yet unequivocally boasts an engagingly vivacious individuality that's all the band's own.

Call them what you like, this really is an excellent record that you'd be a fool to dismiss for who isn't on it.

Ian Fortnam

The Commoners

Find A Better Way GYPSY SOUL

Southern-rocking Canadians reinvent themselves on second album.

Toronto's Commoners are certainly not ashamed to flaunt their influences; it takes about 10 seconds of opener *Find A Better Way* to clock The Black Crowes as a driving force. Rootsy, soulful and bluesy, these are timeless songs steeped in classic-rock tradition, and well beyond the modest scale of 2016 debut *No Stranger*. *Fill My Cup* and *More Than Mistakes* also have that unmistakable uplifting Crowes-y feel, but the band's songwriting touchstones stretch well beyond the brothers Robinson – *I Won't* is all country-rock lap steel and organ, dripping with bittersweet regrets and sorrow, while *Too Much* rides high on a scything Led Zep slide riff. Best of a cracking bunch of tunes is probably the Allmans-vibing, seven-minute *Hangin' On Again*, which ebbs and flows majestically, with lead guitarist (and producer) Ross Hayes Citrullo soloing like a boss towards the climax.

The Commoners are back, and clearly they mean business.

Essi Berelian

Austin Gold

Those City Lights TMR ROCK

Lustrous and ambitious third from the Peterborough rockers.

After their 2017 debut *Before Dark Clouds* and, two years later, their self-titled EP, Austin Gold continue to ascend on their third album.

Those City Lights sees the band still tipping their fedora to Bad Company, Free, Black Crowes et al, but it's solid, beautifully recorded and refreshinly varied, as the band push subtly against the genre's stylistic boundaries.

The downhome rockers come fast: the Stonesy *Our Last Stand*, the strident *Mountain*, and (with keyboard player Adam Leon really earning his crust) *Invincible*. *Never End* offers a dash of modern, Foo Fighter spikiness, *Cut & Run*'s hooks are 80s in flavour, and the band's assured way with a ballad endures on *Get In Line*, *Morning Light* and the title track, a solo spotlight for charismatic vocalist/guitarist David James Smith. The rambling experiment *Real You* misfires, but it only proves Austin Gold's imagination and ambition. A strong record.

Grant Moon

Cockney Rejects

Power Grab CADIZ

Rumoured final album from Oi punks who embraced rock.

Stalwarts of the late-70/early-80s Oi punk scene, Cockney Rejects' long and arduous gigging road out of Custom House culminates in this look back at the band's history – their first album in a decade, and possibly their last.

Rather than being a musical throwback to the heady days of Oi, it's a reflection on the band's career, showing a maturity of songwriting but without losing that standard Rejects edge. Headed up by founding

MARK SELIGER/PRESS

members the Geggus brothers – singer Jeff and guitarist Mick – along with drummer Joe Sansome and returning original bassist Vinny Riordan, *Same Ol' Same Ol'* is indicative of *Power Grab*'s poignant vibe featuring anthemic rock power riffs and some impressive guitar playing. Lessons learned are delivered as homilies in the aggro yet harmonious *Mug (You're A Long Time Dead)* and *40 Years Undefeated*, and the mournful *My Heart Ain't In It*. A storming cover of the Stray Cats' 1980 classic *Runaway Boys* sews it up.

The lads done good.

Alex Burrows

Walter Egan

Pluck! RED STEEL

Giving a pluck.

Arriving in California in the mid-70s, singer-songwriter Walter Egan lucked out, meeting Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks just as they were joining Fleetwood Mac. Buckingham produced him, and he had a brief affair with Nicks after the pair broke up that inspired his only US hit, *Magnet And Steel*, in '78 (over here we were too busy listening to punk and new wave to notice).

Forty-five years later, Egan is still mining the connection, covering Nicks's *Dreams* and exhuming another song he wrote about her at the time, *Woman Deluxe*. Lyrically he has developed an engaging style, as demonstrated on *Dolores*, about the ill-fated Cranberries singer. It's not just women, either; *Glad To Be Alive* is an ode to the late Robin Williams. Musically, however, his songs and arrangements too often tend to lag behind the curve, although *Entwined* and the haunting *Little One* have their charms.

Hugh Fielder

David Crosby & The Lighthouse Band

Live At The Capitol Theatre BMG

The Croz and his folk-rock pals stop the clocks.

Although this was recorded in Port Chester, NY four years ago with his well-harmonised outfit the Lighthouse Band, this might be the last time we hear David Crosby trot out his homilies and homages to a long-gone era.

The night in question found Crosby in decent voice – more surprise than blessing when the newish material is heard. *Things We Do For Love* and the wishy-washy *Vagrants Of Venice* are pleasant, but dull, so it's wait for the old stuff with fingers crossed. *Laughing*, from his debut solo album *If I Could Only Remember My Name*, was written for George Harrison to cover (he didn't), and maintains faint echoes of Joni Mitchell in the current version: a ghost from their past. Then the quiet long run arrives with hippie anthems *Guinnevere*, *Carry Me* and *Déjà Vu*, chased down by *Woodstock*. Sadly it feels like nostalgia for no apparent reason.

Max Bell

Mandalai Lamas

III CEMENT MIXERS

Norwegian garage-rockers channel the spirit of the Stooges.

Capturing the visceral thrill of a live performance in album form is a trickier task than many would think. The urge to buff, shine and polish is understandable and, in most cases, necessary to make things even vaguely listenable at home. Those wedded to the ever-resilient garage-rock scene, however, have a head start on bringing the electric vibes of a dingy basement show to the world's turntables, and Oslo's Mandalai Lamas accomplish the feat with aplomb on their third album, balancing cheap thrills with slick production to straddle the best of both worlds.

Clearly heavily influenced by Iggy And The Stooges, and with notes of Primal Scream at their most leathery, this fuzz-heavy 70s nostalgia-fest crackles with energy and a bottomless sense of fun. There are the odd missteps – the downbeat *Icarus* swerves off the road into the fast-oncoming path of pasty indie dirge in the latter-day Oasis mould – but in general *III* is a no-frills joyride worth buckling up for.

Emma Johnston

X Ray Cat Trio

Haunted PROPERTY OF THE LOST

"Vampire surf rock'n'roll."

Blithely heading past the gatekeepers of rockabilly, psychobilly, surfabilly, punkabilly and their strict door policies, X Ray Cat Trio have landed up at the two people who arguably did more to shape the sound of the electric guitar than anyone else back in the 1950s: Dick Dale and Link Wray and their pioneering rhythms, reverb, tremelo and twang.

The Cats are not concerned with categories or faux jollity. It's the sound they're after, and they palpably have a good time while getting it. The variety that keeps this 10-track album fizzing along is provided by the rhythms and the tempos and by keeping it simple.

Describing themselves as "vampire surf rock'n'roll from Leeds" also sums up their attitude, and their clean approach means that all the influences that oozed subliminally out of Dale and Wray – from country to Arabic – are all mashed up into one singular sound.

Hugh Fielder

City Kids

Filth CARGO

Bar-brawling, melodic street-punk from the wilds of Leeds.

First of all, I would like to remind you that the Anti-Nowhere League were briefly (summer of '82) the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world. I mention this because City Kids bear more than a slight resemblance to those misanthropic biker cretins on *Filth*'s smashing title track, and they may also be the best band in the world soon.

Filth is a total smoker, I'll tell you that much. These Brit brawlers have obviously spent many a long-lost night listening to The Wildhearts on the jukebox, and tracks like *Something Faster*, *Heartbreak* and *Ghosts* all contain the same elements of speed, power and chewy pop hooks. Frontman JJ Watt's gruff Lemmy/Animal snarl shaves off any sappy Ginger-isms, however, giving the band a chunkier, street-punk propulsion. You'll sing along, sure, but you'll probably lose a few teeth along the way too.

Sleazegrinder

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling

Jaime Kyle: elements of soft rock, blues-lite, pop and country-tinged AOR.

Jaime Kyle

Wild One JAIMEKYLE.COM

Championed by *Classic Rock*'s late sister title *AOR*, Kentucky-born Jaime Kyle created ripples with a major-label debut called *The Passionate Kind* back in 1992, and a spot at the following year's UK festival The Gods Of AOR suggested that plenty more was to come. Alas, Kyle never broke through, but her song *Wild One* has been covered by Faith Hill, Kelly Clarkson and Carrie Underwood, and Heart's Nancy Wilson added her vocals to *Stranded*.

For too long Kyle has been AWOL as a recording artist, her most recent record being 1999's *Untangled*. Indeed, this new 12-song set was due 18 months ago. Realising that some fairy dust was required, she got contributions from Thunder's Luke Morley, ex-Whitesnake man Bernie Marsden and Kris Barras, among others, and even tempted Howard Leese of Heart out of retirement. Kyle boasts a strong, warm and welcoming voice, and stylistically speaking *Wild One* ploughs the delicate middle ground between soft rock, blues-lite, pop and country-tinged AOR, tapping the best elements of each. If she doesn't regret those 23 lost years, she bloody well should.

Sabu

Banshee FRONTIERS

During a career spanning almost four decades, Paul Sabu has carved a truly enviable career as an artist, producer and songwriter. However, now in his sixties, regrettably his best days are behind him. This sixth album under the handle of Sabu shares occasional moments of plausibility such as *Kandi* and *Black Shadow Water*, but it really doesn't do his legacy any favours.

The New Roses

Sweet Poison NAPALM

Although way too accomplished to be considered 'boozy', The New Roses bring a suggestion of the Oktoberfest to their hard-driving but deeply melodic hard rock. The German band's fifth album has a distinct swagger, best exemplified by *Usual Suspects*, *Warpaint*, *First Time For Everything* and the excellent *All I Ever Needed*. Fans of Gotthard should give this a try.

Tommy DeCarlo

Dancing In The Moonlight FRONTIERS

New Yorker DeCarlo became the singer with Boston in 2007, voicing several tracks from their most recent album *Life Love & Hope*. Unsurprisingly, there's a flavour of Boston on this follow-up to his 2020 debut *Lightning Strikes Twice*. His voice is exceptional, and at its best the material is pleasingly slick, although overall perhaps a bit faceless.

The Roads

Simple Man ESCAPE MUSIC

Essentially a duo of former Sammy Hagar band guitarist Gary Pihl (now a member of Boston) and UK-based singer Mick Devine of the group Seven, The Roads play cheerful, robust, hook-friendly hard rock, with a little help from guests Lawrence Gowan (Styx), Paul Taylor (Winger, Alice Cooper) and more. As debuts go, *Simple Man* is a very encouraging start indeed.

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THE HARD STUFF REISSUES

Black Sabbath

Heaven And Hell (Deluxe Edition)
Mob Rules (Deluxe Edition) BMG

The Dio-era classics.

In 1979, the planets seemed to have aligned for the greatest of all heavy metal bands and the greatest of all heavy metal singers. Black Sabbath were a band without a frontman after sacking Ozzy Osbourne, and Ronnie James Dio was a frontman without a band, having quit Rainbow. By chance, Sabbath's guitarist Tony Iommi met Dio one night in LA, and on the first day they worked together the magic happened. Iommi had a riff. He always had a riff. Dio pulled a melody out of the air. He had a gift for that. The result was a song of power and beauty, titled *Children Of The Sea*. It was a new beginning for Black Sabbath, a new sound that would be developed in two monumental albums: 1980's *Heaven And Hell* and the following year's *Mob Rules*.

Heaven And Hell (**10/10**) is the masterpiece that Dio cited as the pinnacle of his career. Bassist Geezer Butler considers it equal to the definitive Sabbath classics: the first six albums. Dio had created music on an epic scale with Ritchie Blackmore in Rainbow, and so it was with *Heaven And Hell*, his poetic lyrics steeped in ancient mysteries, his voice phenomenal in its power and range. Most of all, it was his melodic finesse that brought a new dimension to Black Sabbath. Iommi's solos have an emotional intensity unlike anything he had recorded before, and along with the heaviness of Sabbath legend, there is a sense of grandeur and high drama in the album's key songs: *Children Of The Sea*, *Die Young*, the colossal title track, and the thunderous *Neon Knights*, arguably the most heroic heavy metal song of all time.

Mob Rules (**8/10**) is almost as great. A new line-up, with drummer Vinny Appice having replaced the great Bill Ward, delivered head-banging fury in *Turn Up The Night* and the title track, and epic pieces with a darker atmosphere in *Falling Off The Edge Of The World* and *Sign Of The Southern Cross*.

The new Deluxe Editions of both albums are different from those released in 2010, but while *Heaven And Hell* includes previously released live material, *Mob Rules* has a USP: a full live set from 1982, when Dio was about to quit the band he had done so much to resurrect.

The Sabbath story would continue, with and without Ozzy and Dio, for decades to follow, but never again would the band make albums as great as these two.

Paul Elliott

Various

Brown Acid – The Fifteenth Trip RIDINGEASY

Acid redux.

Who'd be an archaeologist? What's the point of spending months digging in a dustbowl with the tip of a tiny paintbrush, only to eventually discover a fragment of Abysinnian teacup? Thankfully, in rock'n'roll terms the *Brown Acid* series of albums does all the exhaustive excavating for you, consistently unearthing the audio equivalents of arrowheads and doubloons rather than insignificant Earl Grey artefacts.

Here be 10 tracks, each an average of three minutes long, each from the 60s or 70s, each more obscure than a pack of zero-watt lightbulbs. Favourites include the excellently named Scrapiron and their song *Roxanne*, brimful of stun-guitar and swollen keyboards. Unlike The Police's *Roxanne*, a prostitute, Scrapiron's is a nymphomaniac (*'She comes to me begging to please her'*), although we suppose the two are not mutually exclusive. The Zoo's *444* – only 222 to go – has a volatile MC5 vibe, right down to its Rob Tyner rant-vocals. Black Hawk's *Little Suzie Looker* is a sneering bubblegum love song; what The Archies would've sounded like if they'd been a genuine garage band. Truth And Janey offer an Amboy Dukes-esque reworking of the Stones' *Under My Thumb*. Strongbow's *Change* is, remarkably, reminiscent of a jazzed-up Uriah Heep. Negative Space's *Forbidden Fruit* is a full-on Stooges cataclysm, with the singer's vocal cords disintegrating before your ears. The only disappointment is Crazy Louie's *My Pants*: we never get to hear what happens after *'she takes a frog and she shoves it in'* the titular trousers.

Geoff Barton

Reef

Glow HASSLE HINDSIGHT

Second album turns 25, gets reissued on coloured vinyl. What's not to like?

Glow was produced by the band and George Drakoulias, who had worked with the Black Crowes and The Jayhawks, as well as with Primal Scream and Ride. Reef's co-producer knew Tom Petty from the *Wildflowers* sessions, and when recording shifted from Abbey Road to LA's Sound City he called in Heartbreaker Benmont Tench to add keyboards. Drakoulias also brought in percussionist Chris Trujillo. The three outsiders' input helped Reef make a big step forward from their debut album *Replenish*.

Glow's biggest hits – *Place Your Hands* and *Come Back Brighter*, anthems opening each side of vinyl – had been Top-10 singles weeks before the album itself hit No.1. But everything shines, and there's joy in the juxtaposition throughout. Witness the stomp of *Summer's In Bloom* following the lazy swing of *I Would Have Left You*; *I'm Not Scared* and *Robot Riff* taking such different routes to sound like War/Zeppelin mash-ups; and the Stonesy sneer of *Yer Old* against acoustic closer *Lullaby*. Best of all, though, is *Consideration*: shades of gospel, a message to love, it's timeless and achingly beautiful.

Depending on where you buy this, hand-numbered sleeves contain either blue, red or yellow discs; 500 glow-in-the-dark exclusives from the band's own webstore have already sold out.

Neil Jeffries

The Doors

Paris Blues RHINO

Is that all there is?

Released as part of Record Store Day's Black Friday event, the main frisson here is the last (apparently) unreleased studio recording by The Doors. *Paris Blues* was part of what Jim Morrison called the "blues day" that produced *Cars Hiss By My Window, Crawling King Snake* and *L.A. Woman* but stayed in the vault since neither Robby Krieger ("not a great tune") nor the late Ray Manzarek ("nothing special") deemed it worthy of rescue. Essentially an upgrade on the *Rock Is Dead* (1969) song *Queen Of The Magazines*, written for and about Morrison's mate Pamela Courson, it's clearly a minor piece. Other rarities are Morrison and Krieger performing *I Will Never Be Untrue* (a *Morrison Hotel* out-take), and a May '69 live cover of Robert Johnson's *Me And The Devil Blues*. Manzarek's humdrum *You Need Meat Don't Go No Further* and *I'm Your Doctor* bulk it out, while three

GETTY

tracks with Albert King guesting on guitar are available on *Live In Vancouver 1970*, best of which is *Who Do You Love?*, although that doesn't eclipse the drama of the *Absolutely Live* version.

File under: 'Something of interest to Doors fans'. Krieger painted the cover art.

Max Bell

Smashed Gladys

Raw GOLDEN ROBOT

Toronto glam-slammers' unreleased third album revisited, now with extras.

One of many hair-metal hopefuls who coulda, woulda and maybe shoulda been contenders, these New York-based Canadians, fronted by the striking voice and stage presence of chief songwriter Sally Cato, turned out two albums of repurposed boogie-rock in the mid-80s just a touch too late to jump to the head of the Cathouse queue, and their third album never saw the light of day. Its demos are retooled here by producer Mark Dearnley, along with early tracks the band recorded with erstwhile mentor Gene Simmons.

The rollicking likes of *Black Beauties And Blue Eyed Blondes* reflect their roots in the blues-rock sound of the early 70s, and a pronounced Zep influence casts the most effective shadow over *Tattooed Blue*. More distinctive, though, is the Simmons-produced *Give It All You've Got*. With more of a Joan Jett than a Janis Joplin feel, it was evidently a road not taken, perhaps not entirely for the best.

Johnny Sharp

Neil Young

Harvest (50th Anniversary Edition) REPRISE

If you're a Neil Young fan, you'll want this.

The 50th-anniversary reissue of Young's classic fourth studio album, 1972's *Harvest* – magical, mystical, tremulous, myth-building – comes complete with the oft-bootlegged *BBC In Concert* recording from February 1972, plus three *Harvest* out-takes and two DVDs: the *In Concert* plus a never-before-seen two-hour documentary on the making of *Harvest*.

It's a helluva way to repackage an album that was originally slated for being too derivative of Young's previous studio album, *After The Gold Rush* – too middle-of-the-road, too populist. *Harvest* was America's best-selling album of 1972, but it was viewed (not least by Young himself) as too 'safe'. Perhaps it was because, following the dissolution of CSN&Y, Young had put together a band of country session musicians (the Stray 'Gators) to help record it.

Listening now, the quality and clarity of the songs shines through as they have shone through these past decades; the chilling simplicity of *The Needle And The Damage Done*, the far-reaching future nostalgia of *Old Man*, even the sweetness of the London Symphony Orchestra on the oft reviled *A Man Needs A Maid* and *There's A World*. Even the South-baiting *Alabama*, which inspired the monster Lynyrd Skynyrd answer song *Sweet Home Alabama*.

Anyone who's grown up listening to Neil Young can't help be moved to tears, by his quaver on *Out On The Weekend* and *Harvest*, the questioning, yearning guitar on *Words*… the chart-topping *Heart Of Gold*, for Christ sake! The whole album is near miraculously flawlessly imperfect, from beginning to end.

Is *Harvest* Neil Young's greatest album? One of them, most certainly.

Everett True

Eric Burdon & War

Eric Burdon & War – The Complete Vinyl Collection

RHINO

RSD box set corrals their three albums on multi-hued vinyl.

Huddling with the bedraggled few thousand braving rain as Eric Burdon & War made their UK debut at September 1970's Hyde Park free concert, it soon became apparent that the former Animals powerhouse, rated one of the UK's finest blues singers, was into something fearlessly unusual for the time in fronting pioneering mixed-race club band War.

After LA producer Jerry Goldsmith facilitated the hook-up for April 1970's *Eric Burdon Declares 'War'*, many regarded War as Burdon's latest backing band. Yet this was something else as the Geordie dynamo's voice became another instrument on improvised work-outs around the Nashville Teens' *Tobacco Road* and their own *Roll On Kirk*. The animated Latin vamp of *Spill The Wine* became a worldwide hit.

December's *Black Man's Burdon* stretched to a double, kicking off with a breakneck *Paint It Black* before settling into a 90-minute street suite of skin-tight grooves underpinning Burdon's counterculture rants and reflections. Despite a bizarre *Nights In White Satin*, closing soul ballad *They Can't Take Away Our Music* shows him on incendiary form and War a Latin-jazz-R&B force of nature bound for glory.

After splitting in '71, Burdon never reached such heights again, while War low-rode to global success that motivated 1976's *Love Is All Around* grab-bag of out-takes (including remarkably effective *A Day In The Life*) and live recordings.

Such barrier-breaking collaboration would soon be commonplace, but those first two statements still hold their own from that verdantly trail-blazing era.

Kris Needs

Iron Maiden

The Number Of The Beast WARNER MUSIC

Forty years on, a classic reissued with a key difference and an added vintage live set.

GETTY

With the band's former singer Paul Di'Anno having eaten, drank and drugged his way to dismissal after the *Killers* tour the previous year, and with their last single having not even charted, it was rebirth or bust for Iron Maiden when they went into the studio in '82 to make their third album.

The Number Of The Beast proved to be a glorious example of the former, and proof of it can be heard in the opening bars of this triple vinyl reissue: *Invaders*, a typically high-octane, exhilarating tale of the enemy coming over the horizon, establishing Maiden's stock-in-trade – a galloping metallic anthem full of fearful talk of war, carnage, derring-do and *Horrible Histories*-style mayhem.

But it wouldn't have worked half as well without their new singer. Compare the charismatic delivery of *Invaders* to the version (then titled *Invasion*) on the B-side of *Women In Uniform* 18 months previously. Something about new arrival Bruce Dickinson's vibrato-wired, just-short-of-hysterical voice adds an extra sense of urgency to Maiden's sound.

And so it proves time and again across the rest of the album. The songwriting has made a great leap forward, with the sound still full of vim but more punch and less punk bluster, and lyrics moving fully into the storytelling realm, as the likes of *Run To The Hills* and *Hallowed Be Thy Name* offer narratives way more fully realised and compelling than, say, *'Iron Maiden's gonna get ya'*. *Run To The Hills* is also Steve Harris's first seriously successful attempt at an epic composition influenced by the prog bands he'd loved as a teenager.

The album is not perfect, of course. Even if *22 Acacia Avenue* makes a more sympathetic address to the anti-heroine of *Charlotte The Harlot* than the original, it's still pretty cringe-inducing in the era of #metoo. Meanwhile, on this reissue Steve Harris has opted to replace *Gangland* with *Total Eclipse*, righting a wrong he's long expressed regret over. But when this is supposed to be a celebration of the original, it seems like an unnecessary airbrushing of history. These are trifling complaints, though, and the inclusion here of the *Beast Over Hammersmith* live set, on which we hear many Maiden fans hearing these songs performed for the first time, two days before the album's 1982 release, adds to its celebratory feel.

Johnny Sharp

THE HARD STUFF

REISSUES

Queens Of The Stone Age

Reissues MATADOR

Repackaged reissues with original artwork for the debut and coloured vinyl for all.

Josh Homme's real genius doesn't lie in the down-tuned riffing that's been fashioned through closely guarded technical secrets, nor is it what he leaves out of his playing or his increasingly controlled falsetto, although these are contributing factors. His brilliance is embedded in those gloriously relentless and metronomic rhythms delivered by a variety of drummers over the years. This is music to dance to. This is rock'n'roll for the 21st century (yes, we know the debut was released in 1998, but let's call that forward planning). This is why Queens Of The Stone Age draw mixed audiences like so few other bands can.

Emerging from the break-up of Kyuss, QOTSA's self-titled debut (**8/10**) was made by just Homme and drummer Alfredo Hernández. And while there was no mistaking where they were coming from, the record was a statement of intent as to where they we were headed. While their name implied a feminine and playfully camp sensibility at odds with rock's more Neanderthal practitioners, the music increased the melodicism, with the added bonus of repetition and groove. This is where Black Sabbath and Neu! get it on and, as evidenced by *Avon* and *Regular John*, their offspring is a wonderful thing.

…Like Clockwork (**9/10**) remains Queens Of The Stone Age's heavyweight masterpiece. Recorded in 2012/13 (following a botched knee operation that almost killed Josh Homme), the album's compact presentation of just 10 songs is in stark contrast to some of the sprawls that had gone before it. Contemplative and meditative, this is a mature work that demonstrates deftly that rock music can be made by adults without them looking like overgrown children. Proving that heavy topics don't have to be heavy-handed, the groove of *I Sat By The Ocean* (*'We're passing ships in the night… We're crashing ships in the night'*) and the Bowie-esque *If I Had A Tail* sweeten the bitterest of pills. Elsewhere, the title track and the aching *The Vampyre Of Time And Memory* elevate Homme's songwriting to a whole new level.

That continual urge for dancing is in evidence from the off on *Villains* (**7/10**), when on *Feet Don't Fail Me* Homme sings *'When the needle hit the groove, I commence to moving/I was chasing what's calling me'*. Alas, by moving too far in that direction, this is an album that loses some of the earlier firepower and weirdness, although redemption is on hand with the likes of *Un-Reborn Again*.

Julian Marszalek

Katatonia

Dead End Kings 10th Anniversary PEACEVILLE

Melancholy masters mark a major milestone.

Such is the consistent quality of their catalogue, picking a favourite Katatonia record is close to impossible. 2012's *Dead End Kings* would have to be one of the main contenders, however. Sonically immaculate, texturally rich and boasting several of the Swedes' finest songs to date, it's a self-evident career milestone and fully deserving of this sumptuous 10th-anniversary deluxe edition.

From the wild dynamics of *The Parting* and the dreamy haze of *The One You Are Looking For Is Not Here*, to the bruising riffs and proggy interludes of *Dead Letters*, the album captured Katatonia in a state of creative reverie. Even the bonus tracks, also included here, are stunning; *The Art Of Darkening*, in particular, is almost dangerously pretty.

For certified 'Tonia nerds, a new 5.1 audio mix is likely to cause palpitations, while vinyl aficionados can bask in the radiance of a new half-speed master. Artist Travis Smith has expanded on the concept behind his original artwork, giving this worthy reissue a suitably familiar but refreshed feel. In fact, presented with all of this dark beauty, it's difficult *not* to conclude that *Dead End Kings* is Katatonia's masterpiece. Or one of them, at least.

Dom Lawson

Fleetwood Mac

The Alternate Collection WARNER

Once more into the archives for alternative takes on old Mac favourites.

This box set brings together alternative takes on five Fleetwood Mac albums (originally released individually and separately for Record Store Day) – *Fleetwood Mac, Rumours, Tusk, Mirage* and *Tango In The Night* – and a live set. Perfect, then, for RSD, in which obsessives and completists compete to snag those precious rarities. Outside of that, though, it's very much a companion piece rather than the main event.

There's a reason why *Rumours*, in particular, is one of the most commercially successful albums of all time (it was the UK's biggest-selling vinyl album in 2020, 43 years after its release), and it's that it is a nigh-on perfect pop-rock record. Once you leave the blues era of the band, the LA bells, whistles and cocaine pixie-dust are what make it. You're not going to beat the breathtaking, vicious, bitter sparkle of *Go Your Own Way* as you already know it, and this alternative version doesn't – it's fine, but a little flatter, a little less magical. It all makes more sense as a project when the songs are stripped back to show their inner workings, as on *The Chain*, and it's in the vastly different demos, acoustic takes and early versions that these discs come into their own. Meanwhile, the live album, stitched together from various performances, crackles with the tension and beauty this era of the band is synonymous with. For fans, this box set will never replace their first long-player loves, but it will give some insight into how they came to life.

Emma Johnston

Ian Anderson

Ian Anderson Plays The Orchestral Jethro Tull RHINO

Vinyl debut for Anderson's symphonic tour of Tull tunes.

Tull's 2003 bestseller *The Jethro Tull Christmas Album* would be the band's last album until their current hit *The Zealot Gene*, and the following year Ian Anderson set out across Europe and the US on the tour that gives this double album its name. Originally released in 2005, it's now available on vinyl for the first time (and who would have predicted this format's resurgence back in the 00s?)

The set captured here was recorded at the Rosekngarten in Mannheim, Germany, with Anderson fronting the Frankfurt Neue Philharmonie Orchestra conducted by John O'Hara, and a band including future Tull members Florian Opahle (guitar) and David Goodier (bass).

All that grumpy bug-eyed salmon farmer, standing-on-one-leg guff aside, Anderson was and remains a world-class rock flautist, and one of British rock's most caustic and inventive songwriters. His symphonic approach to composition lends itself to the orchestral setting here, whether

LISA JOHNSON/PRESS

on solo tracks (Celtic-tinged openers *Eurology* and *Calliandra Shade*, from his then-current album *Rupi's Dance*), Tull deep cuts (*Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of The New Day*, *Up The 'Pool*) or the inevitable *Aqualung*, *Locomotive Breath* and career-launching hit *Living In The Past*.

Exquisitely performed and recorded, this is superior stuff for Tull fans, and all the warmer on vinyl.

Grant Moon

Grateful Dead

Wembley Empire Pool 4/7/1972 RHINO

Hefty vinyl document from the Dead's Europe '72 tour.

Wembley Arena is one of the most appalling venues in London, but when it was called the Empire Pool it had a tad more charm. The Grateful Dead never intended to play there; they'd been booked in for four nights at the Rainbow Theatre in London, but that closed.

This Record Store Day release isn't exactly new, even if the format is, as it's already available in previous box sets, although this latest version will become the collector's choice as a companion to the next night's concert – a Record Store release from last April.

The Empire Pool set includes tried and trusted crowd pleasers like *Me And My Uncle*, *China Cat Sunflower* and *Sugar Magnolia*, along with freshly minted songs from Jerry Garcia and Bob 'Ace' Weir's solo debuts, still band recordings to all intents and purposes. The Dead were in great shape in '72, and excelled on *Black-Throated Wind*, *Sugaree*, and a take on *Playing In The Band* that zipped through several movements before crunching to a tumultuous halt. Other standouts are a mazy *Truckin* and an all-guns-blazing *Not Fade Away*, before they made their exit to *One More Saturday Night*.

Max Bell

Bogshed

The Official Bog Set MELODIC

Post-punk oddballs finally arrive on CD.

Back in the 80s, Bogshed made a uniquely scratchy, skronky racket that, unsurprisingly, turned them into one of John Peel's favourite bands. They made two studio albums, two EPs and some singles, and recorded five sessions for Peel, none of which has ever been available on CD, let alone digitally. *The Official Bog Set* corrects that oversight in one big, wonky splurge.

Adorned with bassist Mike Bryson's grotesque cartoon artwork, *Let Them Eat Bogshed* was a bullish, wonky debut. The combination of weird, grinding bass lines, spiky, discordant guitars and frontman Phil Hartley's cracked kitchen-sink polemics is still inspired, and songs like *Panties Please* and *Slave Girls* still pack a scabby-knuckled punch. The two studio albums – *Step On It* and *Brutal* – have lost none of their swivel-eyed charm either. Those Peel sessions are collected on an expanded *Tried And Tested Public Speaker* EP, and arguably represent the peak of the band's creativity, not least on krautrocky anomaly *Into Me*. The icing on the shed is *Who Scoffed The Trill?*: 70 minutes of mostly previously unheard material, recorded when Bogshed were known as the Amazing Roy North Penis Band. Everything about this is brilliant. Peel was right.

Dom Lawson

Depeche Mode

Playing The Angel: The 12" Singles MUTE

Deluxe vinyl box set of extended perv-pop singles and techno-blues remixes.

Lavishly repackaged across 10 vinyl discs, the 12-inch singles, B-sides and remixes from Depeche Mode's 2005 album *Playing The Angel* still pack plenty of perv-rock poke almost 20 years later. The original album was one of DM's more gritty, bluesy, faith-and-devotion affairs, most notably on Martin Gore's feverish re-imagining of the vintage call-and-response gospel standard *John The Revelator*, which gets multiple dancefloor-stomping remakes here, including the superbly titled *Dave At The Disco Tiefschwarz Mix*. Indeed, the goofy, playful remix titles are part of the enjoyment of this collection. The brooding, Nick Cave-ish doom ballad *Lilian* also gets a trippy makeover as the deliciously named *Robag Wruhme Slomoschen Kikker* mix, although sadly the *Narcotic Thrust Vocal* version of *Suffer Well* is not the porno-tastic anthem it should have been. The stand-out tracks here are the most noisy and irreverent, with *Bitstream* providing two precision-tooled avant-techno deconstructions of *A Pain That I'm Used To*, in exhilarating counterpoint to Goldfrapp's voluptuous narcotic reworking of the same song.

Of course, only an obsessive super-fan with deep pockets will want to shell out 150 quid for a deluxe reissue of old material, but at least the Mode consistently hire adventurous studio talents who accentuate their semi-underground side as experimental sonic explorers with a rich post-punk hinterland.

Stephen Dalton

Todd Rundgren

Something/Anything? RHINO

50th-anniversary Record Store Day box of top Todd.

After a career of great, terrible and plain fruitloop records, and a side hustle as a producer which sealed his place in the rock canon, Todd Rundgren is an artist who you either believe is a genius or simply don't get. (Recent godawful techno offerings have only further confused). Evangelists' best bet in converting sceptics would be to point to this 90-minute double album from 1972, his third solo album, and the one that showed he could do pretty much anything, often all at once.

With three quarters recorded alone and one recorded live with musicians including trumpet player and saxophonist the Brecker Brothers, and future Tin Machiners, it's an impressively melodic float through Carole King-style balladry, power-pop and even a (sort of) operetta. Given the majesty of *I Saw The Light* (conceived, from the off, as 'the hit') and *Hello It's Me*, the ballads are the strong suit, even if Rundgren restlessly seemed to retain scant subsequent interest in that form. There are false starts and crazed U-turns, but he's so driven and determined here that his undoubted dexterity makes everything coalesce, creating an epic that's as swoony as it is cerebral. This four-LP box, each disc on different colour vinyl, revives its nomadic madness.

Chris Roberts

BEST OF THE REST

Other reissues out this month

S*M*A*S*H

Spring 1994 DEMON

Combining the best kinds of mod/punk/pop-art contrivance, brink-located post-Clash/Boys Wonder/Manics trio S*M*A*S*H's New Wave Of New Wave ultimately petered out on the sawdust Caesared beaches of Britpop. But *Real Surreal* still sounds fierce. **8/10**

Hot Hot Heat

Make Up The Breakdown (20th Anniversary) SUB POP

As new-millennium skinny-tied indie flailed, failed and chased its tail post-Strokes, in search of yet another lost cause to champion, Canada's preppy electro-bouncy HHH were briefly the new sliced bread. Yelp-jangle-thud, yelp-jangle-thud… And then they were gone. **6/10**

Jesus Jones

Some Of The Answers DEMON

Ploughing into the first disc of this 15-CD box, you'll marvel at just how good electro-rocking '89 rager *Never Enough* still sounds, but by midway through the tenth dance remix of *Real Real Real* you'll be begging for it all to end. Nice book, though. **6/10**

Paul Weller

Will Of The People (B-sides and rarities) UMC

Lou Reed once said: "My shit is worth others' diamonds." And, it seems, Weller's B-sides are easily worth others' hits. With a voice seasoned to perfection there's soulful weight to all of these 31 tracks, but 2008's Bobby Gillespie-ized *Big Brass Buttons* is a proper lost gem. **8/10**

Various

Kids On The Street CHERRY RED

Another day, another scattershot three-CD punk-era box set. Ostensibly concentrating on '78-vintage power-pop, *KOTS* does have ace scene faces The Pleasers on disc two, but also the *Smash It Up* Damned, Inner City Unit and a past-their-best Searchers. **6/10**

Cactus

Evil Is Going On HNE

Cactus saw ex-Vanilla Fudge Tim Bogert and Carmine Appice making a glorious proto-Montrose mess of the blues with ex-Detroit Wheel Jim McCarty and Amboy Duke Rusty Day. This eight-CD set (four '70-72 ATCO albums bolstered by lives) is searing, savage stuff. **8/10**

Julie Driscoll

1969 ESOTERIC

Former Steampacket/Trinity siren's post-*This Wheel's On Fire* debut sees her teamed with Keith Tippett and Chris Spedding on eight assured, genre-fluid, if jazz-leaning, originals. A long-delayed release ('71) killed it in the market, but it's more than ripe for rediscovery. **8/10**

Virgin Prunes

If I Die, I Die BMG

As stalwarts of the post-punk goth community, Virgin Prunes would support Bauhaus and offer repetitive, circular, ritualistic caterwauling that never seemed to display either destination or punch line. As demonstrated here, by their newly expanded '82 debut. **6/10**

March Violets

Play Loud Play Purple JUNGLE

A nicely curated five-CD/44-page-booklet package that comprehensively collates complete singles/BBC sessions, lives and demos from Leeds-based, Sisters Of Mercy labelmate drum-machine Goths who kept their hearts in the tomb but their eyes on the dance floor. **7/10**

Frank Zappa

Waka/Wazoo Box Set ZAPPA/UME

1972's *Waka Jawaka*/*Grand Wazoo* period gets expanded. Big-band fusion recorded from a wheelchair (post-Rainbow 'fan' assault), FZ reaches for *Bitches/Johnson* Miles Davis but, hobbled by habitual discipline, never fully attains the requisite looseness of caboose. **7/10**

Hard Meat

The Space Between 1969-1970 ESOTERIC

Polite if lumpily portentous of-its-time post-mod/psych prog formerly championed by Chris Blackwell at late-60s Island Records. Not quite tough enough to presage rock or metal's ultimate future, but a lot better than their name suggests. Which isn't saying much. **6/10**

BEST OF THE REST REVIEWS BY IAN FORTNAM

THE HARD STUFF

STUFF

BOOKS & DVDs

Jimi

Janie Hendrix and John McDermott *CHROMA*

Eightieth-birthday celebration of pre-eminent rock architect.

While there are countless books that tell Jimi Hendrix's story in far more forensic detail than this weighty, sumptuously illustrated 300-page celebration of the iconic guitarist's life and work, none offer quite the same one-stop, broad-focused, cinematic experience as *Jimi*.

A significant expansion of Experience Hendrix catalogue director John McDermott's previously published *An Illustrated Experience* (retooled and retold from today's perspective, with a short introduction from Experience Hendrix's Janie Hendrix, Jimi's stepsister) to mark the occasion of its subject's 80th birthday, *Jimi* is a thing of beauty.

Perfectly pitched to hard-core fans and newbies alike, its brisk mix of historical concision and eye-witness accounts, including testimony from Hendrix himself (sourced from personal correspondence and pertinent interviews with contemporary media), cannily captures the meteoric forward momentum of a career still unmatched for dizzying progression and enduring influence. Cracking through an insecure childhood and a teenage misdemeanour-hastened spell in the military (wherein Jimi did indeed succeed in winning "the right to wear the Screamin' Eagle patch of the US Army Airborne", as he wrote home to his father, "for the sake of our name") to an undeniable obsession with playing guitar that swiftly came to dominate his every waking hour. Including numerous photos, many previously unseen, that effect to move events forward at an engagingly rapid pace. It's a bit like the best slide show you've never seen, its accompanying text echoing across the images like the world's most electrifying narration: an illuminating vox pop here, a pertinent fact there. The extraordinary nature of Hendrix's accelerated artistic development seems all the more extraordinary for the fact that it's presented as somehow normal. His metamorphosis from chitlin'-circuit covers sideman to psych-defining songwriter comes across as particularly supernatural. His original plan for *Hey Joe*'s B-side was a version of *Land Of 1000 Dances*, until his manager forced him to write his first original. Less than a day later: *Stone Free*. By the Experience's third single, *The Wind Cries Mary*, Jimi had honed his creative process to such an extent he'd recorded the song in one take and added five guitar overdubs in just 20 minutes.

Jimi is a beautifully presented tale of pure genius, a story so exceptional that, if it were fiction, it would be roundly condemned for being utterly ridiculous.

Ian Fortnam

Led Zeppelin: Five Glorious Nights

Dave Lewis *RUFUS*

Whole lotta Zep, from a week in '75, now updated.

In May 1975, with their album *Physical Graffiti* having topped both the British and US charts, Led Zeppelin played five triumphant, sold-out nights at London's 17,000-capacity Earls Court arena. Even The Osmonds were there. It's an ongoing debate, but Zep might have been at their peak, and unquestionably the new-fangled giant video screens enhanced the arena experience.

Forty years later, noted Zeppelin archivist Dave Lewis compiled a lavish, mostly chronological, photographic coffee-table record of those shows, complete with annotations, memorabilia and brief commentaries. Seven years after that, it's now been revamped with a new foreword and afterword plus a host of new photographs. What shouldn't surprise, but actually still shocks, is just how beautiful Page and Plant were. Bare of chest, long of hair and generous of sideburn, they looked as sexy as they sounded. For sure this is how they would like to be remembered, but, lest we forget, this is how they actually were.

John Aizlewood

The McCartney Legacy Volume 1 – 1969-73

Allan Kozinn and Adrian Sinclair *HARPER COLLINS*

All the days in the life.

As the most famous living rock star on the planet, Paul McCartney can justify this mammoth, exhaustive but never exhausting day-by-day account of his solo career.

The slow, painful dissolution of The Beatles is a recurring theme for the first half of this 712-page tome, as McCartney is driven to sue Lennon, Harrison and Starr to rid himself of the crooked clutches of business affairs manager Allen Klein, to whom the other three are naively in thrall, while recording his first two solo albums and setting up his family.

While McCartney has not directly contributed to this project, he has not prevented anyone else from doing so, and a picture emerges beyond the genial thumbs-aloft character, of a man in complete control, even telling his musicians exactly what to play.

Volume 1 ends with hair-raising revelations from Macca and his band Wings' trip to Lagos in '73 to record *Band On The Run*.

Hugh Fielder

Elton John @75

Gillian G Gaar *MASTER BOOKS*

Landmark birthday observed with potted, photo-heavy history.

The life and music of Sir Elton John has hardly been under-documented, especially in recent years, thanks to the *Rocketman* film and his wonderfully frank memoir *Me*. And Elton's own press interviews are rarely short on engaging career anecdotes. However, seasoned rock biographer Gillian Gaar has managed to come up with a pretty neat treatment of the great man's life via 75 moments (by way of a belated celebration of his 75th birthday back in April) that defined his career.

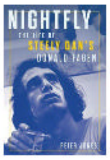
Seasoned Eltonites won't find any major new revelations here, with old press quotes and the aforementioned autobiography relied on for quotes to make up for the lack of any new interviews, but the book is lavishly presented and sleekly designed around hundreds of archive photos, making this work as much a handsome coffee-table tome to dip into as a volume of biography.

Johnny Sharp

Nightfly: The Life Of Steely Dan's Donald Fagen

Peter Jones *CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS*

The man behind the Dan.



Anyone wanting to write a biography of Steely Dan founder/keyboard player/vocalist Donald Fagen – certainly one worth reading – needs to have a great work ethic and an abundance of 'can do'. A private, evasive enigma who doesn't like to talk about his music and career, let alone his personal life, Fagen has mostly shied away from the former and stonewalled the latter.

With *Nightfly* Peter Jones does

PHOTO FROM JIMI BY JANIE HENDRIX AND JOHN MCDERMOTT, PUBLISHED BY CHRONICLE CHROMA. COURTESY JAMES "AL" HENDRIX COLLECTION / © AUTHENTIC HENDRIX, LLC

a good job of pulling together what information he's been able to find and weaving it into an informative and engaging read, if at times a bit dry and lacking zip as a result of unnecessary detail, but apart from a stroll through Fagen's pre-Dan days it's as much book about Steely Dan as it is a Fagen biography.

What is available to know about Donald Fagen is in here and/or in Fagen's more dryly entertaining memoir *Eminent Hipsters*. What you don't know about him after you've read both, you probably never will.

Paul Henderson

The Beatles 1963: A Year In The Life

Dafydd Rees OMNIBUS

You wouldn't think there could be so much in it.

This is a chunky, very satisfying read, packed with an outrageous amount of detail – The Beatles' everyday life during one year, 1963, documented day to day, punctuated by first-hand reminisces from fans and momentary participants and candid photos.

Saturday, November 9: when The Beatles arrived at retail entrepreneur John Bloom's flat, the building's 68-year-old porter Arthur Dyer refused to let them in, unaware of who they were. "I don't care a bugger who you are, you're not coming in dressed like that."

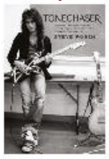
If this was about anyone else, the sheer level of detail could deter even the staunchest fan, but, as HRH Queen Elizabeth II said: "Think what we would have missed if we had never heard The Beatles." This level of detail about The Beatles, though (the mundane and the sensational), is fascinating, intoxicating... you just want to read on. And on....

Everett True

Tonechaser: Understanding Edward

Steve Rosen SELF-PUBLISHED

A unique relationship, detailed acutely.



Seasoned LA-based rock journalist Steve Rosen is the only person Eddie Van Halen ever wanted to write a book about him. Across 50 or so interviews they shared an unusual bond, begun just before the release of Van Halen's debut album in '78 and ending in disengagement rather than acrimony.

Tonechaser reflects its author's concern about betraying a 26-year friendship, and the trust illustrated by the guitarist's increasing proportion of "don't print this" caveats. Today, after EVH's untimely death in 2020, the poignant truths about his life and Van Halen can be told. When Rosen writes: "The time spent with him existed on a different plane", you believe him. This book is personal.

Its 600 pages contain a little too much contextualising, but – through the transcripts, as well as observations and analysis – you learn a lot about Eddie's hopes and frustrations. Respectful and revealing, Rosen has written the book this guitar-hero great deserves.

Neil Jeffries

Why Britain Rocked: How Rock Became Roll And Took Over The World

Elizabeth Sharkey

ACADEMICA PRESS

A history of British pop, seen from a different perspective.

Get past the cheesy, wince-inducing title and you'll find an unexpected treasure trove of exploration, academic rigour and a welcome, bold attempt at re-framing the history of British pop music, to explain that nothing happens in a vacuum, and that The Beatles' success that took the world by surprise should not have been such a surprise at all.

To do this, Elizabeth Sharkey delves back through British music's past, and investigates various sources and trails, not just the much-quoted influence of music-hall and American blues records on 1960s British pop music. The Celts, the Quakers, the talismanic Paul Robeson, Shakespearean actor Ira Aldridge, folk ballads... all are examined, and linked back and forth to the present and past.

It's an absorbing read that sometimes over-reaches itself and doesn't always gel, but certainly can't be faulted for its ambition or lack of research.

Everett True

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– Uncut, Albums of the Year

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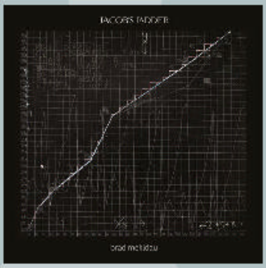
– Classic Rock, 8/10



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– Mojo, Reissues of the Year ★★★★★

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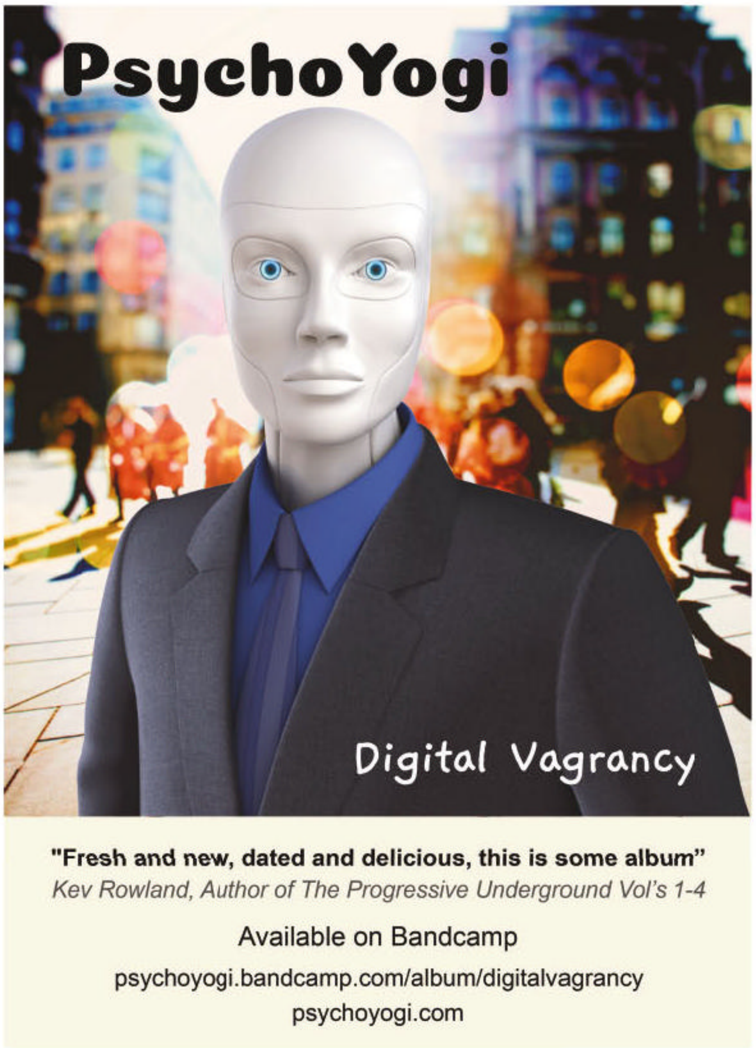

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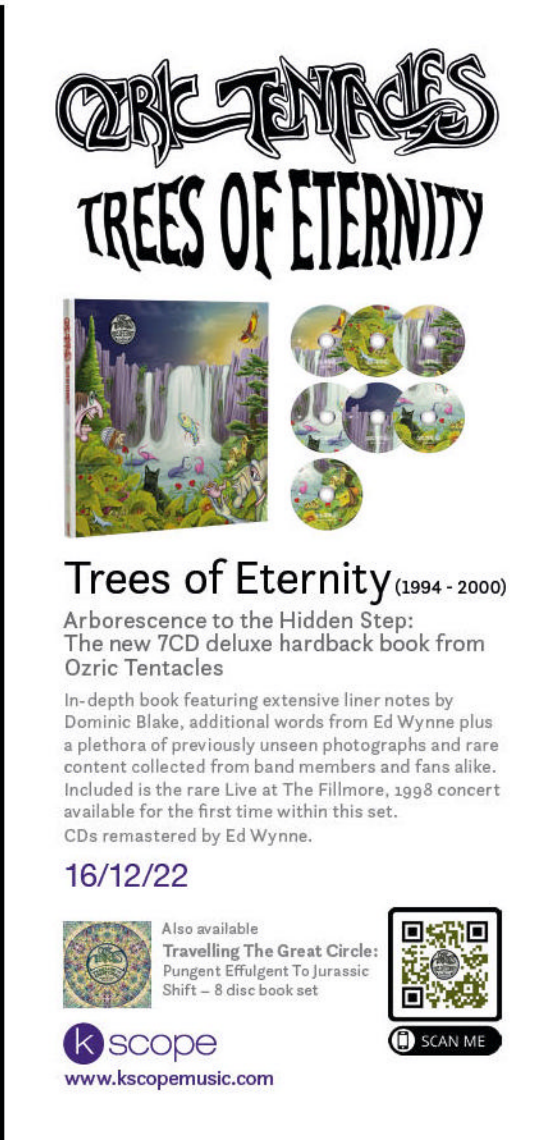

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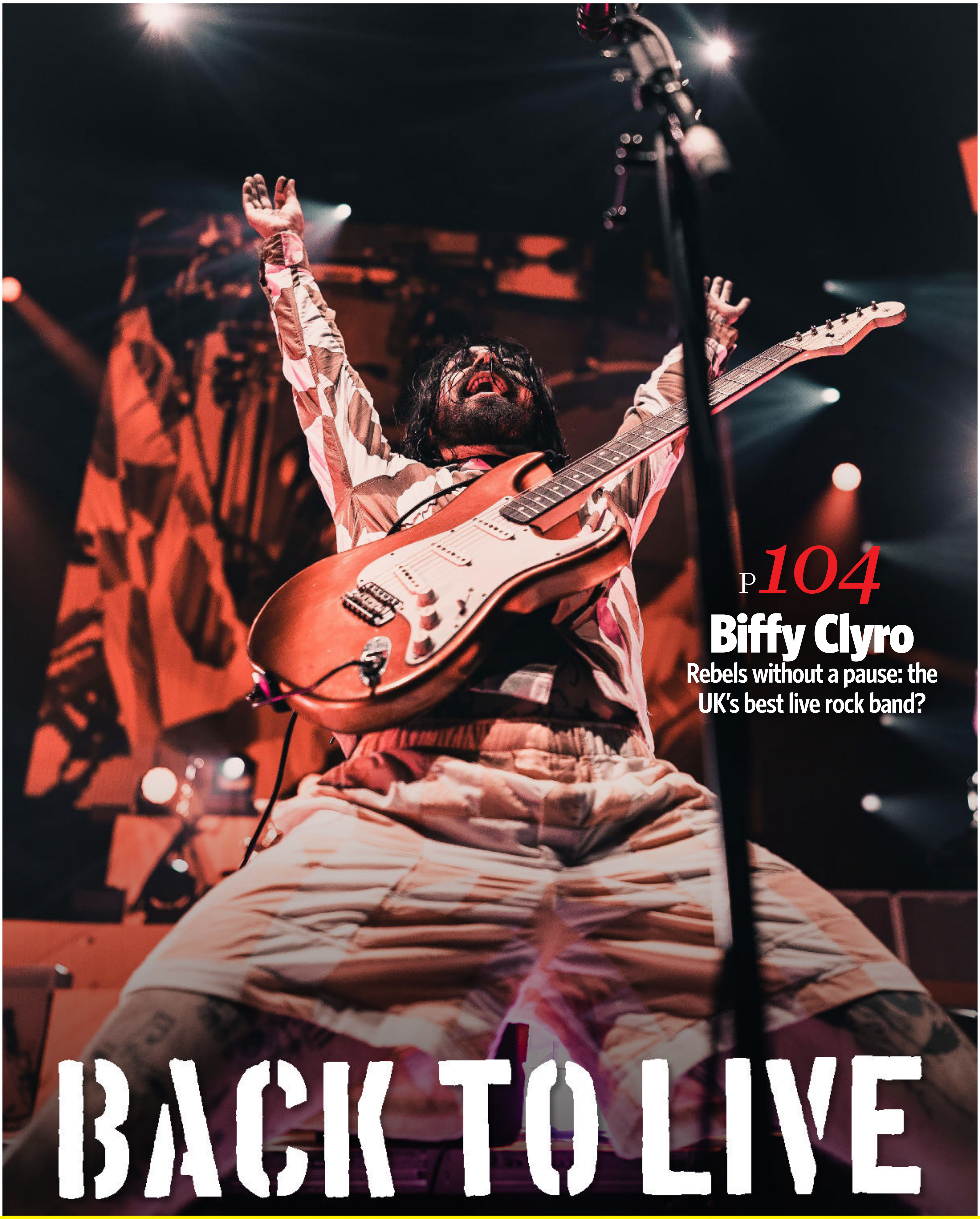


P104

Biffy Clyro

Rebels without a pause: the UK's best live rock band?

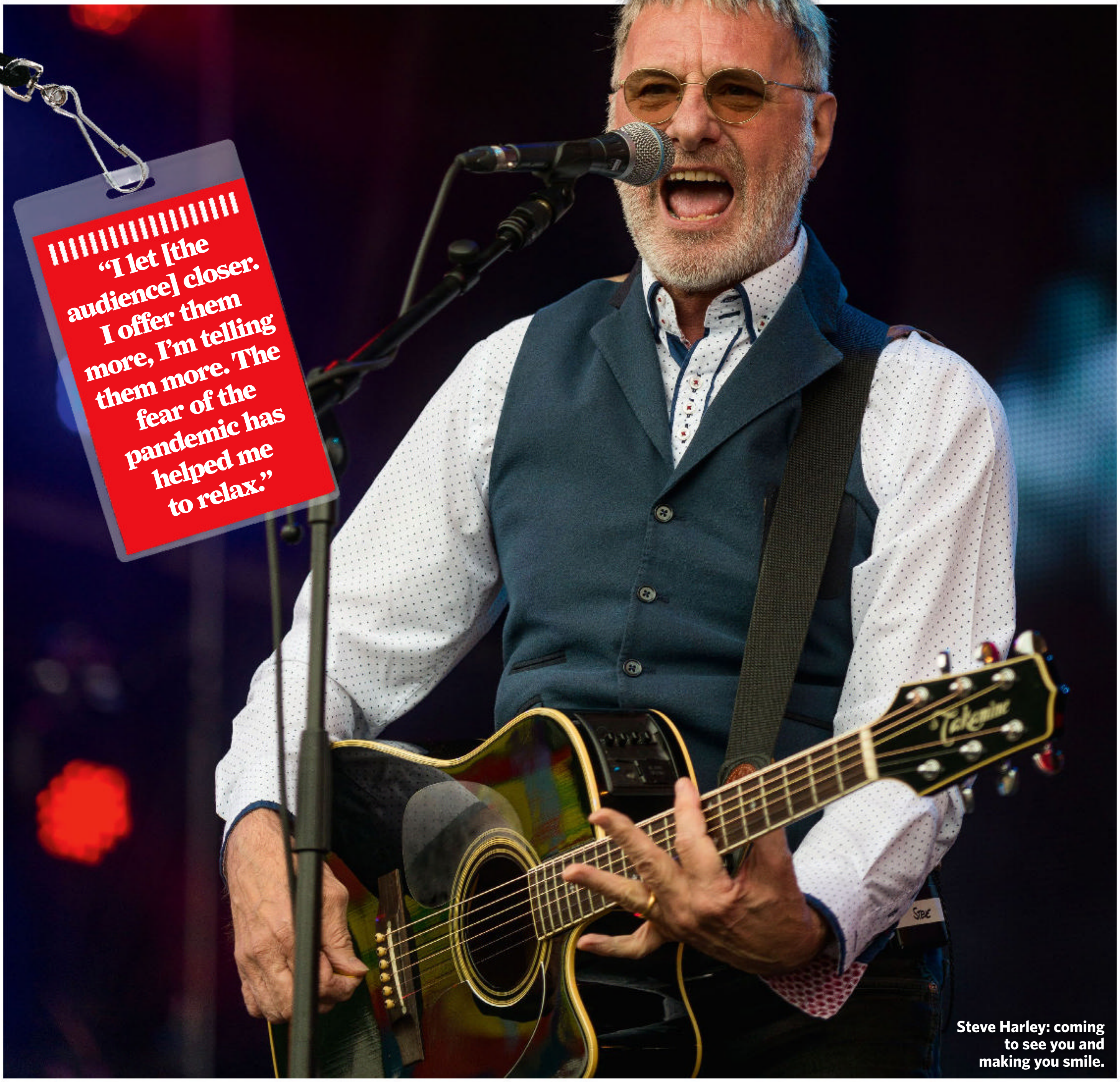
ALAMY

BACK TO LIVE

The High-Voltage What's On Guide

Edited By Ian Fortnam (Reviews) and Dave Ling (Tours)

P94 Interviews
P99 Tour Dates
P102 Live Reviews



"I let [the audience] closer. I offer them more, I'm telling them more. The fear of the pandemic has helped me to relax."

Steve Harley: coming to see you and making you smile.

Cockney Rebel

Celebrating their 50th year, the Steve Harley-led band are on tour in the UK until December 22.

Steve Harley, the co-founding vocalist and now only remaining original member of the band whose hits include *Mr Soft* and the timeless *Make Me Smile (Come Up And See Me)*, checks in as Cockney Rebel celebrate their 50th anniversary with a short UK tour.

Congratulations on reaching fifty years of Cockney Rebel. How does that make you feel?
It's astonishing. The question I'm perpetually asked is whether, when the band first started out, I could imagine it lasting this long. Of course not, we were just young lads. Our hopes were to play some gigs, make records and maybe get shagged a bit [laughs]. It was as simple as that. But those five decades were packed with adventure. I've lived a fantastic life.

As well as the upcoming celebratory gigs, will there be some kind of archive-based, career-exploring release?
Yeah. It's being worked on by Chrysalis, but unfortunately the thing is delayed. Chrysalis Records now have the catalogue that was owned by EMI, and they've put together a box that covers everything from the first album [*The Human Menagerie*] in 1973 until 1980 [the year after Harley's second solo album, *The Candidate*]. Besides writing the foreword, I've given them stuff that many years ago I would never, ever have allowed to come out – out-takes from recordings and conversations from the studio, all kind of things. It's for the hard-core fan.

What do you recall of the band making its debut at the Roundhouse in London on July 23, 1972, opening for the Jeff Beck Group?
My principal memory is that we had a guitar player [Nick Jones] who I then dropped before the signing of our contract with EMI. Those first two albums [*The Human Menagerie* and *The Psychomodo*] had no guitarist, just a violinist [Jean-Paul Crocker]. To this day I have problems with electric guitar players because they all want to be the singer. They're

MARTIN BONE/PRESS

frustrated frontmen. The egos get in the way, which really bores me.

What would be a few of your cherry-picks of the best moments from Cockney Rebel's first fifty years?
Oh, crikey, there are so many. [After a long silence] One of my greatest memories was playing the first two albums with the orchestra and choir at Birmingham Symphony Hall [in 2012]. Being up there on stage with fifty-seven people, singing *Sebastian* and *Ritz*, was a great feeling. And afterwards we did five more of those shows, selling out the Royal Albert Hall. I'd been at the two 'big' Isle of Wight Festivals – Bob Dylan and The Band in 1969, and Hendrix the following year – so my first time there in 2003 was also very special. We went on stage at two in the afternoon but played to thirty thousand people.

Topping the singles chart with *Make Me Smile (Come Up And See Me)* in 1975 must have been another significant milestone?
Getting to number one was a definite highlight. It was the last night of an American tour when my manager called to say we'd leapt from number nine to number one. We got the red-eye [overnight flight] home to do *Top Of The Pops*, and after a quick kip at the Kensington Hilton went to Wood Lane where it was recorded. And I got the words wrong [laughs]. I was jet-lagged and I scrambled them up. But afterwards my life was never the same – nor should it have been.

Let's contrast that with a dark moment.
I'll answer that, but I'm a great fatalist – as one door shuts, another opens. One that stays with me and three thousand fans is Liverpool Empire, 1976. We were playing *Death Trip*, a ten-minute piece from *Human Menagerie*, and I went head-first into the orchestra pit. I was unconscious and broke three ribs, but the band played on without me. I went back on and finished the show.

In a more general sense, how is live music progressing with its rebirth? So much of its infrastructure – including touring staff and grass-roots venues – was decimated by covid.
I think it's getting back on its feet. I was heartbroken for theatre staff and musicians, who traditionally struggle to pay their bills. My wife Dorothy and I are very lucky to live in a big house surrounded by two acres of woodland; I can walk for an hour without leaving my own property. So we got by quite well and I wrote some new songs. We have a week at Rockfield Studios booked in January.

I know it wasn't like that for everyone, and something I've noticed since we kicked off again in August is the audiences. Right from the start I've had an easy rapport with crowds, but what's becoming more apparent is how much music means to them. Without it, people almost suffocated with despair. Now they're pleased to be alive again. There's something there that's more than just a rapport. It's a communion.

How has it changed you?
I've opened up. I'm not anal about things any more. I let [the audience] closer. I offer them more, I'm telling them more. The fear of the pandemic has helped me to relax. Like I said, I'm not a religious man but it's about a communion – coming together, sharing. **DL**

Cockney Rebel's tour ends on December 22.

KIT WOOD/PRESS

Joanne Shaw Taylor: a "superstar in waiting", according to Joe Bonamassa.

Joanne Shaw Taylor

The 'not just a blueser' guitarist/singer has a few UK dates left.

The Midlands-born, US-based singer, guitarist and songwriter previews a tour for her latest, eighth studio album, the Joe Bonamassa-produced *Nobody's Fool*.

The covid-affected Allman Family Revival tour in the States began your escape from lockdown.
Yeah. It was a multiple-artist package. I was only on stage for two numbers and then everyone came back out for a big jam as the finale, so it was a nice way to ease back into touring. All I did was show up with my guitar. Until then we had tried to book tour after tour hoping the virus would go away, but of course it just didn't.

When you returned to live performances, what was the first gig back in front of a live audience?
I went back out in February of this year with some warm-ups in Florida and then on to the Blues Cruise. After so long of being locked up, being on a boat full with five thousand people felt completely surreal.

Joe Bonamassa once said you were a "superstar in waiting". How did you come to sign to his label Keeping The Blues Alive Records for last year's *The Blues Album*?
It was due to covid. Joe and I are good friends, we talk once a week, and when I said I was considering making a blues covers album I asked him to produce it. Fortunately he said yes. And then Roy [Weisman, JB's manager and business partner] offered to release it on KTBA, which was a no-brainer.

Joe's achievements speak for themselves, but he seems to be the guy that a particular type of fan enjoys knocking.
They do. And I get some of that too. With me it's mostly misogyny, but Joe gets bitterness. People see his guitar collection and… Well, y'know, he's earned it. Also, Joe does a lot for others, things like his Blues In Schools project. His charity Keeping The Blues Alive did a lot during lockdown to help starving musicians. It's the old green-eyed monster.

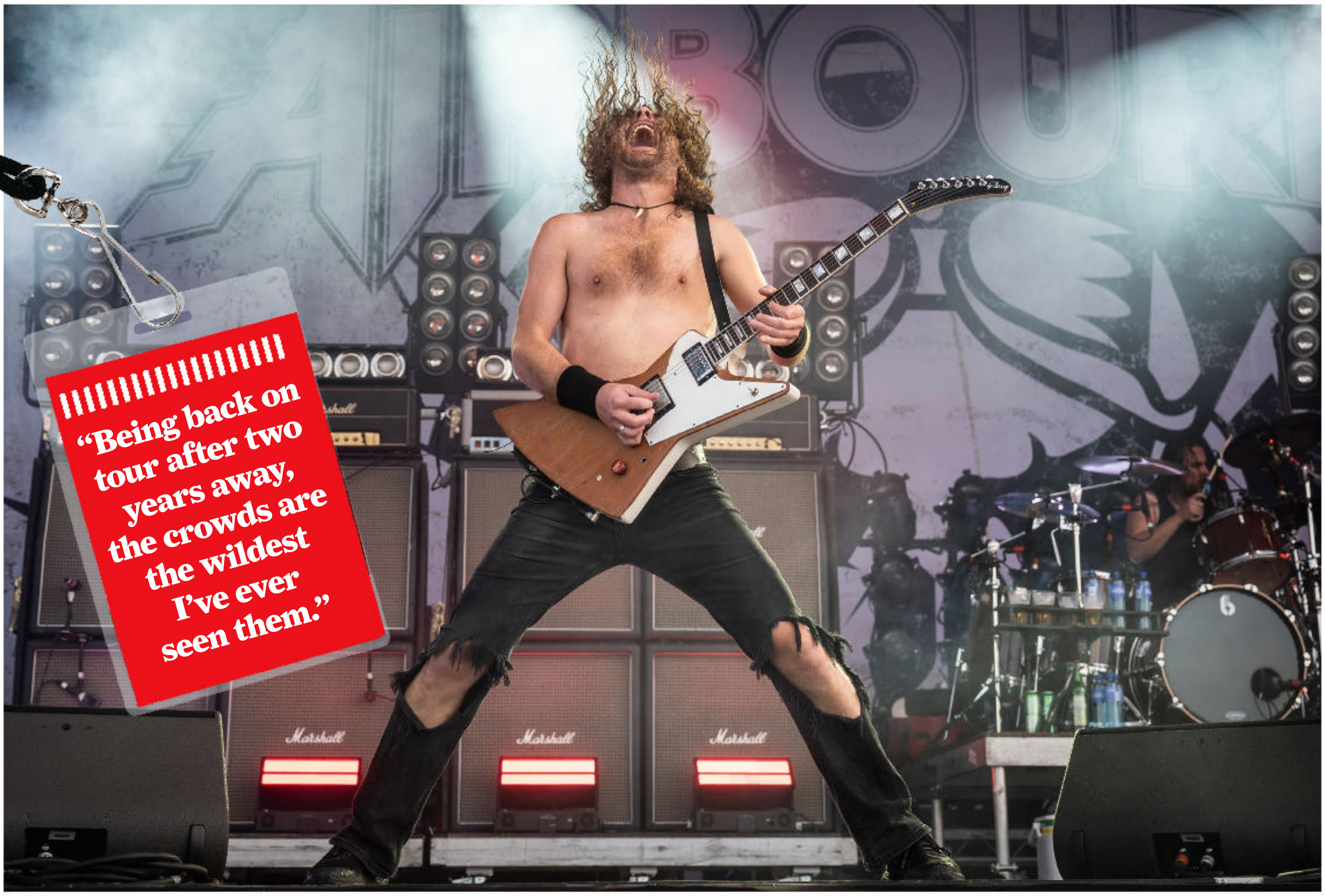
***Nobody's Fool* reunites you with your early mentor Dave Stewart on a remake of the Eurythmics song *Missionary Man*. He's been there with you right from the start, hasn't he?**
Yeah. Dave's known me since I was fifteen, and although he's not said so directly, I suspect he's proud of the way my career has gone. It's been a really great relationship.

The press release/biog describes *Nobody's Fool* as "retro pop with a modern flair, without sacrificing its blues roots". That's pretty accurate.
The 'retro' part is certainly what I was going for, because when I wrote it I was listening to a lot of Fleetwood Mac and Joni Mitchell. But the biog also says it's my most personal set of songs so far, which I don't think is true.

***Won't Be Fooled Again* and *Just No Getting Over You* sound like break-up songs, but you still managed to make them sound summery.**
Thanks. I don't think of this as a break-up album, but now that I'm approaching forty I surprise myself by how often I go back to the things I wrote about for *White Sugar* [her debut from 2009] when I was in my twenties. It's not a new relationship, it's just how I look back on those days and realise I have softened with time.

With early reviews of *Nobody's Fool*, the consensus is that it adds further distance to the blues-rock of your past.
I don't think I ever really was a blues-rock artist; even *White Sugar* had some soul and pop songs. But I'll always be a blues guitarist at heart. For me it's about being able to do all of those things. **DL**

The tour ends on December 11.



KATIA OGRIN

> "Being back on tour after two years away, the crowds are the wildest I've ever seen them."

Airbourne

The hard-rockin' men from Down Under deliver their no-frills rock'n'roll in the UK in 2023.

As the hard-rocking Aussie quartet return to playing live, frontman/guitarist Joel O'Keefe says: "Let's get into a room, crank it up and let everything go." Which sounds good to us.

Last night Airbourne played in Newcastle, Australia. It was the band's first gig on home soil in how long?
Shit, it must be about eight years or something – a long fucking time.

You're supporting Steel Panther, which seems a bit odd.
Our bands have played a lot of festivals, and we get along well. Yesterday we even went fishing with Stix [Zadinia, drummer]. Steel Panther are the big ticket out here in our own country, but we were so desperate to play again.

During lockdown, Melbourne was among the most locked down cities in the world.
Mate, for two hundred and fifty-fucking-something days there was a ring of steel around the place. The most you could travel was five kilometres from your house, and drones were flown to enforce the eight p.m. curfew. It went on and on and on.

So long, in fact, that you had to re-learn how to play Airbourne songs.
[Laughs] Yeah, absolutely. I went onto YouTube to check out kids playing our songs better than I ever could – by a long stretch. I'm serious. But now, being back on tour after two years away, the crowds are the wildest I've ever seen them. We've had covid, a recession and now Putin… Fuck that guy… The answer is simple: let's get into a room, crank it up and let everything go.

On this upcoming European tour Airbourne are bringing their biggest stage presentation to date. What does that consist of?
I've no idea of actual production, but we're filling up the trucks with more shit than we've ever brought before. We're going full hammer-and-tongs. Imagine people that are so hungry to play rock'n'roll, they can put anything they like into their trucks. That's what we're doing.

How is the band's new rhythm guitarist Jarrad Morrice fitting in?
Mate, he's absolutely perfect. It's like the fourth wheel of the band is finally back on. Jarrad is just a great, humble bloke that loves playing rock'n'roll. I've never seen anybody practise harder than he does. He absolutely fucking brings it.

What went wrong with his predecessor, Mathew Harrison? Did he turn tee-total or something?
Oh y'know, it just didn't work out. I'll leave it at that.

Nobody knows for sure, but it seems as though AC/DC may have played their last tour. Does that bring sadness, but also a feeling of optimism – that there's a gap in the market?
I'm like everyone else, I want another AC/DC tour. I have to see another AC/DC show. If it happens on Mars, fuck it, I'm getting on that rocket.

With so many of the 'classic' early bands now retired, and the pool of established festival headliners shrinking, some are questioning the future of rock'n'roll.
I would be lying if I said the subject didn't bother me. But after seeing a hundred thousand people this year at Hellfest [in France] and at [Germany's] Wacken Open Air, I have no worries about the future. This music isn't part of the mainstream and it's not on the radio, but there are young people out there losing their shit to it. It's as resonant and as good as ever. But I don't worry about the future of rock'n'roll, because I'm too busy living it today.

Did you write a new Airbourne album during the pandemic?
Actually, I did not. But the moment we went back on the road it all fell into place. We needed to be playing in front of people again to make it real. Bang – suddenly we had a million ideas. **DL**

The recently rescheduled tour starts 26 July 2023.

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JAN 13 SIN CITY, SWANSEA
JAN 14 CHINNERYS, SOUTHEND
JAN 15 CONCORDE 2, BRIGHTON
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Tour Dates

BRYAN ADAMS
London	O2 Arena	Dec 14

AIRBOURNE, CROBOT, BLUES BILLS
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Dec 21
London	Brixton Academy	Dec 22

ALKATRAZZ, GIRLSCHOOL, TYTAN
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 3
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Feb 4
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Feb 5
Bradford	Nightrain	Feb 7
Newcastle	Trillians	Feb 8
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Feb 9
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 10
London	Camden Underworld	Feb 11

ALTER BRIDGE, HALESTORM, MAMMOTH WVH
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Dec 11
London	O2 Arena	Dec 12

ANIMALS AS LEADERS
Birmingham	The Mill	Jan 10
Glasgow	Garage	Jan 11
Manchester	The Ritz	Jan 12
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jan 13

THE ANSWER
Blackpool	Waterloo Bar	Mar 16
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 17
Bristol	Thekla	Mar 19
London	100 Club	Mar 20
Leeds	Key Club	Mar 21
Belfast	Limelight 2	Mar 23

BEAST IN BLACK, FIREWIND
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Feb 20
Birmingham	Institute 2	Feb 21
Bristol	The Fleece	Feb 22
Manchester	Rebellion	Feb 23
Glasgow	Cathouse	Feb 24
Dublin	Whelans	Feb 25

KRIS BARRAS BAND, DEA MATRONA
Tavistock	Wharf	Jan 21
Gloucester	Guildhall	Jan 25
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Jan 26
Dover	Booking Hall	Jan 27
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Jan 29
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Jan 30
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Feb 1
Southampton	The Brook	Feb 2
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Feb 3
Bristol	Thekla	Feb 4
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Feb 7
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Feb 8
Wolverhampton	Steel Mill	Feb 9
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 11
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Feb 12
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 13
Edinburgh	The Caves	Feb 15
Aberdeen	The Tunnels	Feb 16
Dundee	Church	Feb 17
Glasgow	Cathouse	Feb 18
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 20
Hull	The Welly	Feb 22
Norwich	Epic Studios	Feb 23
Brighton	Chalk	Feb 24
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 25

BIG THIEF
Gateshead	The Sage	Apr 5
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Apr 6
Manchester	Apollo	Apr 7
Cardiff	Great Hall	Apr 8
London	Brixton Academy	Apr 11
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Apr 12

BLACKBERRY SMOKE, READ SOUTHALL BAND
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 26
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 27
Belfast	Telegraph Building	Mar 29
Dublin	Olympia	Mar 30
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Apr 1
Manchester	Academy	Apr 2

BLACK FLAG, TOTAL CHAOS
Sheffield	Academy	Jan 24
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Jan 25
Glasgow	Garage	Jan 26
Manchester	The Ritz	Jan 27
London	Kentish Town Forum	Jan 28

BLACK STAR RIDERS, MICHAEL MONROE, PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 13
Norwich	UEA	Feb 15
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Feb 16
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 18
Leeds	Academy	Feb 19
Cardiff	Tramshed	Feb 21
Bristol	Academy	Feb 22
Glasgow	SWG3	Feb 23
Newcastle	City Hall	Feb 24
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 26

GETTY

JOE BONAMASSA
Bournemouth	BIC	May 9
Blackpool	Opera House	May 10
Leeds	First Direct Arena	May 12
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	May 13
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	May 14

BONHAM-BULLICK
London	Holborn Pizza Express	Jan 12
Emsworth	St James' Hall	Jan 14
Sedgefield	Blues Club	Apr 14
Lowdham	Village Hall	Apr 15

BRAVE RIVAL
Skegness	Great British Rock & Blues Fest	Jan 14
Portsmouth	Guildhall Studio	Feb 2
Wolverhampton	Giffard Arms	Feb 11
Gt Yarmouth	Legends Of Rock Fest	Mar 4

BRITISH LION, CONEY HATCH, AIRFORCE
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Jan 6
Sheffield	Leadmill	Jan 7
Glasgow	Garage	Jan 8
Carlisle	Brickyard	Jan 10
Huddersfield	Parish	Jan 11
Swansea	Sin City	Jan 13
Southend-on-Sea	Chinnerys	Jan 14
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jan 15
Dover	Booking Hall	Jan 17
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jan 18
Norwich	Epic Studios	Jan 19

BROTHER FIRETRIBE, ONE DESIRE, STRÅLE
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 29
Birmingham	Asylum	Mar 30
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 31

DANNY BRYANT
Derby	Flowerpot	Feb 10
Sheffield	Greystones	Feb 11
Barnoldswick	Arts Centre	Feb 16
Kinross	Green Hotel	Feb 18
Hartlepool	South Durham WMC	May 27

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE, JINGER, ATREYU
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Feb 26
Bristol	Academy	Feb 28
Liverpool	Mountford Hall	Mar 1
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 3
Glasgow	Barrowland	Mar 4
Leeds	Academy	Mar 6
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 7
Southampton	Guildhall	Mar 8
Swansea	Arena	Mar 10
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Mar 11

FRANCK CARDUCCI & THE FANTASTIC SQUAD
Wigan	Old Courts	Dec 9
London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Dec 10
Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 11

CLUTCH
Bristol	Academy	Dec 13
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 14
Manchester	Academy	Dec 15
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 16
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 17

CHERIE CURRIE, BLUE RUIN
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Mar 15
Buckley	Tivoli	Mar 17
Dublin	Workman's Cellar	Mar 18
Belfast	Voodoo	Mar 19
Newcastle	Trillians	Mar 21
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Mar 22
Crumlin	The Patriot	Mar 24
Northampton	Roadmender	Mar 25
Bradford	Nightrain	Mar 26
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 27

THE DARKNESS, BLACK STONE CHERRY, DANKO JONES
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jan 28
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Jan 29
Glasgow	OVO Arena	Jan 30
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Jan 31
Manchester	AO Arena	Feb 2
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Feb 3
London	Wembley Arena	Feb 4

ROCK RECOMMENDS

PETER GABRIEL

Expect the unexpected on the prog/rock icon's first tour in nearly a decade, likely to be a cracker and a very hot ticket.

See below for dates. Currently June 17 to June 25.

THE DEAD DAISIES, FM, GRAHAM BONNET BAND
Dublin	Academy	Dec 10
Belfast	Limelight	Dec 11
Edinburgh	Academy	Dec 13
Bristol	SWX	Dec 15

DEF LEPPARD, MÖTLEY CRÜE
Sheffield	Bramall Lane	May 22
London	Wembley Stadium	Jul 1
Lancashire	Lytham Festival	Jul 2
Dublin	Marlay Park	Jul 4
Glasgow	Hampden Park	Jul 6

DIRTY HONEY
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Jan 21
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Jan 22
London	Highbury Garage	Jan 24
Manchester	Academy 3	Jan 25
Glasgow	SWG3 Warehouse	Jan 26
Nottingham	Bodega	Jan 28
Sheffield	Corporation	Jan 29
Cardiff	The Globe	Jan 30
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Jan 31

REBECCA DOWNES
Skegness	Rock & Blues Festival	Jan 13
Darlington	The Forum	Feb 17
Kinross	Green Hotel	Feb 18

DROPKICK MURPHYS, PENNYWISE, THE INTERRUPTERS
Belfast	Telegraph Building	Jan 13
Dublin	3 Arena	Jan 14
Newcastle	City Hall	Jan 16
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jan 17
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Jan 18
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Jan 20
London	Wembley Arena	Jan 21
Birmingham	Academy	Jan 22

FRANCIS DUNNERY'S IT BITES
Glasgow	Saint Luke's	Jan 19
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Jan 20
Manchester	Club Academy	Jan 21
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Jan 22

ELECTRIC SIX
Bristol	Academy	Dec 9
London	Islington Academy	Dec 10
Brighton	Concorde 2	Dec 11

EPICA, APOCALYPTICA, WHEEL
Bristol	Academy	Jan 31
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 1
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 2
Manchester	Academy	Feb 3
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 4

FOCUS, EDGAR BROUGHTON
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Apr 20

PETER GABRIEL
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jun 17
London	O2 Arena	Jun 19
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 22
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 23
Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 25

GRAHAM GOULDMAN
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Mar 6
Sunderland	Fire Station	Mar 7
Glasgow	Saint Luke's Church	Mar 8
Buxton	Floral Pavilion	Mar 9
Holmfirth	The Civic	Mar 10
Stamford	Corn Exchange	Mar 12
Lytham St Annes	Lowther Pavilion	Mar 13
Southport	The Atkinson	Mar 14
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Mar 15
London	Cadogan Hall	Mar 16
Basingstoke	The Haymarket	May 18
Oswaldtwistle	Civic Arts Centre	Mar 19
Lincoln	Drill Hall	Mar 20
Wavendon	The Stables	Mar 21
Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn	Mar 22
Salford	Quays	Mar 23

GUN
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Dec 11
Newport	Patriot	Mar 31
Narbeth	Queens Hall	Apr 1
Buckley	Tivoli	Apr 2

STEVE HARLEY & COCKNEY REBEL
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Dec 10
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Dec 11
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Dec 16
Cheltenham	Town Hall	Dec 19
Birmingham	Town Hall	Dec 20
Manchester	RNCM	Dec 22

Recommended

BETH HART
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Mar 7
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Mar 9
Sheffield	City Hall	Mar 11
Manchester	Bridgwater Hall	Mar 13
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 15
London	Palladium	Mar 17, 18
Brighton	Dome	Mar 21

STEVE HILLAGE, THE UTOPIA STRONG
Cambridge	Junction	Mar 21
Norwich	Epic Studios	Mar 22
Newcastle	University	Mar 23
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 24
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 25
Glasgow	SWG3	Mar 26
Southampton	1865	Mar 28
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Mar 29
Bristol	Academy	Mar 30
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 31
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 1
Brighton	Concorde 2	Apr 2

HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES, THE TUBES, SEETHER
Scarborough	Open Air Theatre	Jul 5
Swansea	Arena	Jul 7
Manchester	AO Arena	Jul 8

London	O2 Arena	Jul 9
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jul 11
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jul 12

INME, RAGING SPEEDHORN

Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Dec 9
Dover	Booking Hall	Dec 10
Brighton	Patterns	Dec 11

IRON MAIDEN

Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 24
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 26
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jun 28
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 30
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 3
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jul 4
London	O2 Arena	Jul 7, 8

ELTON JOHN

London	O2 Arena	Jun 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, May 30
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Apr 19
Manchester	AO Arena	May 31, Jun 2, 3
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jun 6
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jun 8, 10, 11
Aberdeen	PJ Live	Jun 13, 15
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 17, 18

ROBERT JON & THE WRECK, MEGHAN PARNELL & DAVE BARNES

Cardiff	Earl Haig Memorial Club	Feb 7
Sheffield	Corporation	Feb 8
Chester	Live Rooms	Feb 9
Leamington	The Assembly	Feb 10
London	Camden PowerHaus	Feb 11
Bury	The Met	Feb 12
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Feb 13
Aberdeen	Tunnels	Feb 14
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 15
Hartlepool	South Durham Steel Works	Feb 16
Gloucester	Guildhall	Feb 17
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Feb 18

LAURENCE JONES

Southampton	1865	Dec 9
Southend-on-Sea	Chinnerys	Dec 10
London	Holborn Pizza Express	Jan 26
Newbury	Arlington Arts	Jan 27
Sevenoaks	Stag Theatre	Jan 28
Cannock	The Station	Feb 3
Wimborne	Tivoli Theatre	Feb 11
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Feb 15
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Feb 16
Morecambe	The Platform	Feb 17
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 18
Crumlin	The Patriot	Feb 24
Leeds	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	Feb 26
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Mar 3
Bristol	Thekla	Mar 8
Bridport	Arts Centre	Mar 9
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Mar 10

KARNIVOOL

Bristol	Academy	Feb 3
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 5
Manchester	Academy	Feb 7
Leeds	Stylus	Feb 8
London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 9
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 10

KATATONIA, SÓLSTAFIR

London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 10
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 11
Bristol	SWX	Feb 12
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 13
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 14

KERBDOG

Bristol	The Fleece	Mar 16
London	Islington Academy	Mar 17
Leeds	Key Club	Mar 18
Glasgow	Cathouse	Mar 19

KILLING JOKE

London	Royal Albert Hall	Mar 12

MARCUS KING

London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 21
Bristol	Academy	Mar 22
Glasgow	SWG3	Mar 23
Leeds	Beckett University	Mar 25
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 26
Dublin	Academy	Mar 27

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD

London	Brixton Academy	Mar 22, 23

KING KING, GLENN TILBROOK

Glasgow	Barrowland Ballroom	Mar 2
Leeds	Academy	Mar 4
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Mar 5
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Mar 9
Norwich	Waterfront	Mar 10
Manchester	Academy	Mar 11
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 12
New Brighton	Floral Pavilion	Mar 14

Cardiff	Y Plas Nightclub	Mar 16
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Mar 17
Oxford	Academy	Mar 18
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 19
Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Mar 22
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Mar 24
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Mar 25
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Mar 26
Cambridge	Junction	Mar 29
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Mar 30

JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST

Leeds	City Varieties	May 23
London	Islington Assembly Hall	May 28

LEPROUS

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 7
Glasgow	Slay	Feb 8
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 9
Bristol	SWX	Feb 10

LEVELLERS (UNPLUGGED)

Cheltenham	Town Hall	Feb 27
Dorking	Halls	Feb 28
Bath	Forum	Mar 1
Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn	Mar 2
Liverpool	Philharmonic	Mar 3
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Mar 4
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 6
Northampton	Derngate	Mar 7
Reading	Hexagon	Mar 8
London	Hackney Empire	Mar 9
Poole	Lighthouse	Mar 10
Truro	Hall For Cornwall	Mar 11
Barnstaple	Queen's Theatre	Mar 13
Yeovil	Westlands	Mar 14
Harrogate	Royal Hall	Mar 15
Hull	City Hall	Mar 16
Newcastle	Opera House	Mar 17
Buxton	Opera House	Mar 18

LIFE OF AGONY, MADBALL, TARAH WHO?

London	Tufnell Park Dome	Feb 3
Birmingham	Asylum	Feb 4
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 5
Manchester	Club Academy	Feb 7
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 8
Southampton	1865	Feb 10
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Feb 11

LIFESIGNS

Southampton	1865	Feb 23
Leicester	The Musician	Mar 2
Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Mar 3, 4
London	Putney Half Moon	Mar 5
Cardiff	Fuel	Mar 9
Abingdon	Northcourt	Mar 11

AYNSLEY LISTER, RIK READ BAND, RAMBLIN' PREACHERS

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Jan 31

LONELY ROBOT

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Feb 8

LONG DISTANCE CALLING

Manchester	Rebellion	Feb 14
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Room	Feb 15

JESSE MALIN, TOMMY STINSON

Glasgow	Stereo	Feb 15
Manchester	Pink Room	Feb 16
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 17

CHANTEL McGREGOR

Sevenoaks	Stag Theatre	Dec 9
Cardiff	Acapella Studios	Jan 8
Leamington Spa	Temperance	Jan 9
Hertfordshire	Corn Exchange	Jan 26
Pocklington	Arts Centre	Feb 9
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 10
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Feb 17
Southampton	1865	Mar 5
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	May 4
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	May 5
Bosworth	Blues Festival	May 6
Rotherham	Parkgate Brewery Tap	May 13
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	May 26
Glasgow	Classic Grand	May 27
Aberdeen	Café Drummond	May 28
Silsden	Town Hall	Jun 17
Alford	Blues Festival	Jun 2

MOGWAI

Aberdeen	Music Hall	Dec 20
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Dec 21
Glasgow	Barrowland Ballroom	Dec 22, 23
Manchester	Albert Hall	Feb 10
Leeds	Academy	Feb 11
Gateshead	The Sage	Feb 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 14
Bath	Forum	Feb 15
Cardiff	Great Hall	Feb 16
Brighton	Dome	Feb 17

ROCK RECOMMENDS

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL

Metallica, Slipknot (pictured) and Bring Me The Horizon head up the UK's biggest rock and metal festival of 2023.

Castle Donington	Racetrack	Jun 8-11

Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Feb 18
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 19

MUSE

Plymouth	Home Park	May 27
Huddersfield	John Smith's Stadium	Jun 20
Glasgow	Bellahouston Park	Jun 23
Milton Keynes	National Bowl	Jun 25

NEW MODEL ARMY

Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 9
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 10

ORANGE GOBLIN

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Dec 16

OZZY OSBOURNE, JUDAS PRIEST

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	May 31
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	Jun 2
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 4
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 7
Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 10
London	O2 Arena	Jun 12
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Jun 14

PAPA ROACH, DON BROCO

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Mar 21
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Mar 23
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Mar 24
London	Alexandra Palace	Mar 25

PARAMORE

Dublin	3 Arena	Apr 13
Cardiff	International Arena	Apr 15
Glasgow	The Hydro	Apr 17
Manchester	AO Arena	Apr 18
London	O2 Arena	Apr 20, 23
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Apr 22

STEPHEN DALE PETIT

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 28

TED POLEY (UNPLUGGED)

Belfast	Deer's Head	Mar 23
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Mar 24
Newport	The Patriot	Mar 25
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Mar 26
Newcastle	Trillians	Mar 28
London	Camden Black Heart	Mar 29
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Mar 30
Buckley	Tivoli	Mar 31
Northampton	Black Prince	Apr 2

PORCUPINE TREE

Manchester	Castlefield Bowl	Jun 29

THE PROFESSIONALS

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Dec 19

QUIREBOYS

Coventry	Empire 2	Apr 20
Brighton	Patterns	Apr 21
Dover	Booking Hall	Apr 22
Stockton-on-Tees	Georgian Theatre	Apr 27
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Apr 28
Chesterfield	Real Time	Apr 29
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	May 4
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	May 5
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	May 6
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 11

Glasgow	Oran Mor	May 12
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 13
Manchester	Night & Day Café	May 18
Birmingham	Castle & Falcon	May 19
Bristol	The Exchange	May 20
London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 2

RAVEN

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Mar 2
Newcastle	St Dom's	Mar 3
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Mar 4
Machynlleth	Red Lion	Mar 5
Birmingham	Asylum	Mar 7
Great Yarmouth	Hard Rock Hell	Mar 8
Bradford	Nightrain	Mar 9
Crumlin	The Patriot	Mar 10
London	Camden Black Heart	Mar 11
Nuneaton	Queen's Hall	Mar 12

Recommended

REEF, WHEN RIVERS MEET

Plymouth	The Dep	Mar 30
Bournemouth	Academy	Mar 31
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 1
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Apr 13
Northampton	Roadmender	Apr 14
Margate	Dreamand	Apr 15
Hastings	White Rock Theatre	Apr 16
Chester	Live Rooms	Apr 21
Hull	The Welly	Apr 22
Guildford	Boileroom	Apr 23

HENRY ROLLINS (SPOKEN WORD)

Bexhill-On-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 24
Liverpool	Mountford	Mar 25
Dublin	Vicar Street	Mar 26
Belfast	Limelight	Mar 28
Glasgow	Pavilion Theatre	Mar 29
Whitley Bay	Playhouse	Mar 30
Buxton	Opera House	Mar 31
Birmingham	Town Hall	Apr 1
Nottingham	Albert Hall	Apr 2
Cardiff	Tramshed	Apr 3
Bath	Komedia	Apr 4
London	Palladium	Apr 5
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Apr 6
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Apr 7

SABATON, BABYMETAL, LORDI

Leeds	First Direct Arena	Apr 14
London	Wembley Arena	Apr 15
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Apr 16
Glasgow	The Hydro	Apr 18

JOE SATRIANI

Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 12
Gateshead	The Sage	May 13
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	May 14
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	May 16
Glasgow	Academy	May 17

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

Stroud	Subscription Rooms	Dec 9
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Dec 10
High Wycombe	Old Town Hall	Dec 11

GETTY

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

Warrington	Parr Hall	Apr 18
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Apr 19
Newcastle	Tyne Theatre	Apr 20
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Apr 21
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Apr 22
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 23

Recommended

SLADE

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Dec 15
Cardiff	Tramshed	Dec 17
Norwich	Waterfront	Dec 18
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 20
Leeds	Warehouse	Dec 22
Grimsby	Docks Academy	Dec 23

SPEAR OF DESTINY

Bedford	Esquires	Dec 9
Darwen	Library Theatre	Dec 10
Worcester	Marrs Bar	Dec 11
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Dec 13
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 14
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Dec 15
Dunfermline	PJ Molloys	Dec 16
Manchester	Academy	Dec 17

SPIKE (ACOUSTIC)

Sheffield	The Greystones	Feb 4
Newcastle	The Cluny	Feb 5
Bradford	Nightrain	Feb 11
Gt Yarmouth	Legends of Rock Fest	Mar 5
Belfast	Voodoo	Mar 11
Raynes Park	The Cavern	Mar 19
Leicester	The Musician	Apr 29

SPIKE'S QUIREBOYS

London	Islington Academy	Dec 15

STONE BROKEN

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 16
Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Feb 8
Liverpool	Academy 2	Feb 9
Huddersfield	The Parish	Feb 10
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Feb 11
Swansea	Sin City	Feb 13
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 14
Hertford	Corn Exchange	Feb 16
Dover	Booking Hall	Feb 17
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Feb 18
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Feb 19
Guildford	Boileroom	Feb 21
Oxford	Academy 2	Feb 22
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 23

SWEET

Northampton	Roadmender	Dec 9
Manchester	Academy	Dec 10
Norwich	Waterfront	Dec 11
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Dec 15
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Dec 16
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 17
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 18

THERAPY?, REWS

Colchester	Arts Center	Dec 14
Stoke-on-Trent	The Sugarmill	Dec 15
Southend-on-Sea	Chinnerys	Dec 16

THOSE DAMNED CROWS

Leeds	Key Club	Feb 17
Manchester	Academy 3	Feb 18
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 19
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 21
Bradford	Nightrain	Feb 22
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Feb 24
Swansea	Arena	Feb 25

DEVIN TOWNSEND

Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 28
Bristol	Academy	Mar 29
Manchester	Academy	Mar 31
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 1
Newcastle	University	Apr 2
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 4
Norwich	UEA	Apr 5

MARK TREMONTI SINGS SINATRA

London	IndigO2	Dec 15

TRIVIUM, HEAVEN SHALL BURN

Glasgow	Academy	Jan 12
Birmingham	Academy	Jan 13
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Jan 14
London	Brixton Academy	Jan 15

MARTIN TURNER EX-WISHBONE ASH

Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Feb 24
Chelmsford	Social Club	Mar 3
St Helens	Citadel	Mar 5

GETTY

Maidenhead	Norden Farm Centre	Mar 10
Derby	Flowerpot	Mar 16
Sheffield	The Greystones	Mar 17
Hull	Wrecking Ball Arts Centre	Mar 18
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 19
Morecambe	The Platform	Mar 22
Glasgow	The Ferry	Mar 23
Kinross	Green Hotel	Mar 24, 25
Newcastle	The Cluny	Mar 26
Southampton	1865	Mar 30
Dartmouth	Flavel	Apr 1

VILLE VALO

Bristol	Academy	Mar 10
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 11
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 13
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 14
London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 15

DANNY VAUGHN (UNPLUGGED)

Bradford	Nightrain	Dec 9

VEGA

Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 16

VOLBEAT, SKINDRED, NAPALM DEATH

Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 12
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 15
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 16
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 17
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 19
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 20

VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

Manchester	Night & Day Café	Feb 1
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 2

RICK WAKEMAN, THE ENGLISH ROCK ENSEMBLE, THE ENGLISH CHAMBER CHOIR

London	Palladium	Feb 22, 23

RICK WAKEMAN'S GRUMPY CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Dec 10
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Dec 11
York	Barbican	Dec 13
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Dec 14
Buxton	Opera House	Dec 16
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Dec 17
Worthing	Assembly Hall	Dec 21

W.A.S.P.

Manchester	Academy	Mar 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Mar 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 19
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 21
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 22
Bristol	Academy	Mar 23
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Mar 24
Dublin	National Stadium	Mar 25
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Mar 26

ROGER WATERS

Birmingham	Utilita Arena	May 31
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 2
London	O2 Arena	Jun 6, 7
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 10

THESE WICKED RIVERS

Stafford	Top Of The World	Dec 11

WILLE & THE BANDITS

Plymouth	The Box	Feb 9
Truro	The Old Bakery	Feb 10
Bridport	Arts Centre	Feb 11
Southampton	1865	Feb 12
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Feb 23
Bristol	Thekla	Feb 24
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 25
Glasgow	Hug And Pint	Mar 1
Kinross	Green Hotel	Mar 2
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Mar 3
Newcastle Upon-Tyne	The Cluny	Mar 4
Worcester	Drummonds	Mar 9
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Mar 10
Nottingham	Bodega Social Club	Mar 11
Oxford	Bullingdon Arms	Mar 16
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	Mar 17
Birmingham	Actress & Bishop	Mar 18
Sheffield	The Greystones	Mar 19

DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN

Settle	Victoria Hall	Jan 25
Glasgow	Eastwood Park Theatre	Jan 26
Inverness	One Touch Theatre	Jan 27
Aberdeen	Arts Centre	Jan 28
Kinross	Green Hotel	Jan 29
Stafford	MET Studio	Jan 31
Windsor	Old Court	Feb 1
Ardley	Manor Farm	Feb 2
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 3
Walton-on-Thames	Riverhouse Barn	Feb 5
London	Pizza Express Live	Feb 6
Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Feb 10
Port Erin	Arts Centre	Feb 24

Classic Rock RECOMMENDS

ROGER WATERS

Solo and Pink Floyd songs come together, along with what's likely to be an eye-popping visual spectacular.

See below for dates. Currently May 31 to June 10.

Peel	Centenary Hall	Feb 25
Leicester	The Musician	Feb 28
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Mar 1
Cardiff	Acapela Studio	Mar 2
Ilfracombe	Landmark Theatre	Mar 3
Mylor	Tremayne Hall	Mar 4
Torrington	Plough Arts Centre	Mar 5

Festivals

ALFORD ROCK & BLUES FESTIVAL

FOCUS, BAND OF FRIENDS, JACKIE LYNTON, MORE

Alford	Springbok Estate	Jun 30-Jul 2

ARCTANGENT FESTIVAL

CAVE IN, SCALPING, CONJURER, IGORRR, MORE

Somerset	Fernhill Farm	Aug 16-19

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL

MEGADETH, ANTHRAX, KILLSWITCH ENGAGE, MORE

Derbyshire	Catton Park	Aug 10-13

CALL OF THE WILD

THOSE DAMN CROWES, SHIRAZ LANE, TROY REDFERN, MORE

Lincolnshire	Showground	May 26-28

CHELSEA BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

TEN YEARS AFTER, CATFISH, BRAVE RIVAL, MORE

London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	May 21

CORNWALL ROCKS

FM, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Park	Oct 6-8

DESERTFEST

UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS, GRAVEYARD, KADOVAR, MORE

London	Camden [Various Venues]	May 5-7

DOWNLOAD

METALLICA, SLIPKNOT, BRING ME THE HORIZON

Castle Donington	Racetrack	Jun 8-11

FIRESTORM

KRIS BARRAS, WHEN RIVERS MEET, COLLATERAL, MORE

Manchester	Whitebottom Farm	Aug 11-13

HAMMERFEST

LORDI, PRIMORDIAL, GAMA BOMB, MORE

Birmingham	Academy	Feb 11, 12

HARD ROCK HELL

PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS, TYKETTO, GEOFF TATE, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Nov 205

HARD ROCK HELL NWOCR

SCREAMING EAGLES, TRUCKER DIABLO, WHEN RIVERS MEET, MORE

Leicester	Academy	Jan 21, 22

HARD ROCK HELL PROG

JOHN PAYNE'S ASIA, THE FLOWER KINGS, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Apr 14, 15

HARD ROCK HELL SPRING BREAK

HOUSE OF LORDS, CRASHDÏET, CANDLEMASS, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Mar 8-12

LEEDS BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

LAURENCE JONES, XANDER & THE PEACE PIRATES, CATFISH, MORE

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Feb 26

LINCOLN BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

HENRIK FREISCHLADER, THE CINELLI BROTHERS, MORE

Lincoln	The Drill	May 6

MAYORS ROCK FEST

THESE WICKED RIVERS, THE HOT DAMN!, GORILLA RIOT, MORE

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 8, 9

A NEW DAY FESTIVAL

LINDISFARNE, PENTANGLE, NINE BELOW ZERO, MORE

Faversham	Mount Ephraim Gardens	Aug 18-20

PRIMORDIAL GENERAL MAYHEM

THOSE DAMN CROWES, SOUTH OF SALEM, MORE

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 29

PROGNOSIS

RIVERSIDE, VOIVOD, SOEN, MORE

London	IndigO2	Apr 22, 23

RADAR

PERIPHERY, HAKEN, LOATHE, MORE

Manchester	BEC Arena	Jul 28-30

STEELHOUSE

AIRBOURNE, KRIS BARRAS, THE ANSWER, MORE

Ebbw Vale	Hafod-y-Dafal Farm	Jul 28-30

STOCKTON BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

TEN YEARS AFTER, LAURENCE JONES, BLUE NATION, MORE

Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	May 13

STONEDEAD

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT, THERAPY?, THE ANSWER, MORE

Newark	Showground	Aug 26

TAKEDOWN

SKINDRED, SLEEP TOKEN, LOATHE, INME MORE

Portsmouth	Guildhall	Apr 8

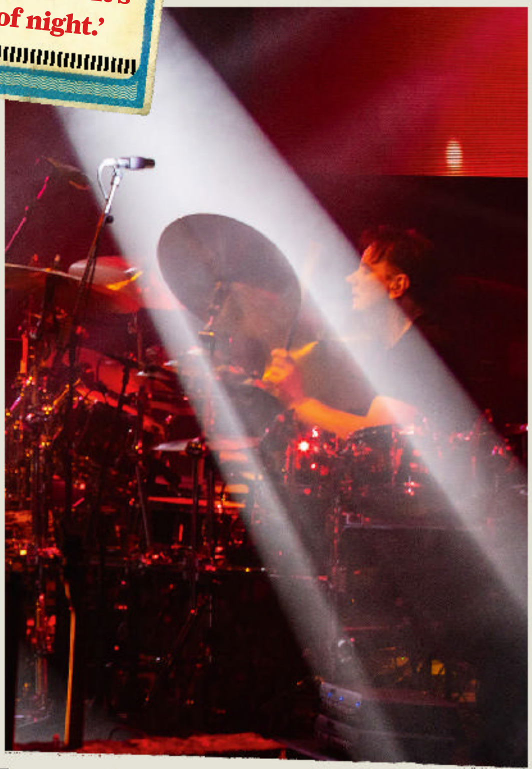
WINTER'S END FESTIVAL

THE TANGENT, RWPL, KNIGHT AREA, MORE

Chepstow	Drill Hall	Mar 30-Apr 2

'A man in the front row shouts 'I love you!' It's that kind of night.'

Steven Wilson fronts the reunion show that fans had just about given up hoping for.



Porcupine Tree

London Wembley Arena

They nailed their comeback album, and now the 21st-century alt.prog stars triumph on long-awaited, sold-out reunion show.

★ Few arenas have been this packed since pre-covid times. Even back then, most rock bands struggled to fill such cavernous spaces as Wembley Arena. The fact that it's packed tonight feels like vindication for a group that never quite managed to reach the masses.

Since calling time in 2010, Porcupine Tree's core trio have kept busy. Keyboard player Richard Barbieri released solo and collaborative records. Gavin Harrison drummed for King Crimson and The Pineapple Thief. And as the abundance of *The Raven That Refused To Sing* and other Steven Wilson T-shirts reflects, Wilson has carved out his own empire. As a solo artist he revels in contrarian moves, throwing pop and electronica at furious progheads expecting David Gilmour guitars, flute freakouts and 20-minute epics. Pissing off certain fans is part of the deal.

Tonight it is not. Mindful of the 12 years people have waited for this, Porcupine Tree give them what they want, while honouring their own mission to avoid a full-fat nostalgia fest. Accordingly, they play 2022's *Closure/Continuation* in full, interspersed with choice catalogue highlights; mostly fan favourites, mostly from the superior *In Absentia* and *Fear Of A Blank Planet* records. It feels like a celebration, as much of a 'love-in' as possible from a band like this. A 'no phones' request precedes the show, and for the most part it's obeyed.

Blackest Eyes makes the perfect opener: brutal, tender, weird and catchy all at once. Revamped album imagery is projected on to the backdrop, the first of many commanding, Tool-meets-Pink Floyd visuals. "It's quite a long show," Wilson warns, with the gentle caution of a biology teacher, in his button-up shirt and glasses. Roars of approval surge, and a man in the front row shouts 'I love you!' It's that kind of night.

C/C's first single *Harridan* explodes with gnarly bass rumbles, electronics and gravity-defying drums. The nastiness of *Rats Return* offsets the dreamy likes of *Drown With Me* and *Dignity*. *The Sound Of Muzak* is gorgeously sad, lamenting the 'content' age in light and dark shades ("Twenty-one years ago I wrote that!" Wilson says wryly. "What a *visionary*!"). It's like Radiohead with a pop heart, ably bolstered by newbies Randy McStine and Nate Navarro on guitars/backing vocals and bass respectively.

Part two opens with *Fear Of A Blank Planet*, 2007's ode to youth disenchantment, and one of PT's most satisfying marriages of heavy, soft, strange and accessible textures. Pill-popping, dead-eyed kids are projected artfully on to the backdrop. For anyone in love with Porcupine Tree's beefcake side – the one that flirts with Nine Inch Nails as much as with the prog icons that inspired Wilson to start the band – it's like an early Christmas present. Later on *Halo*, the sole inclusion from 2005's *Deadwing*, will have a similar effect. Conversely, the electronica-heavy *Walk The Plank* finds Wilson swapping from guitar to a keyboard. You wonder if maybe this is where he'd really like to be; enigmatic behind synths, not rocking out. But then *Herd Culling* sees them tear into the night with razor-groove distortion and menacing lupine videos, and he doesn't seem to mind the "mindless headbanging" he lamented earlier too much.

"Are you ready for a *really* long song?" Wilson asks by way of introduction to the 18-minute *Anesthetize*, generating one of the most fulsome responses of the evening. He may as well have asked: "Who here likes chips?" or "Free money, anyone?"

Lo-fi ballad *Collapse The Light Into Earth* (not played live before this tour) is delivered by Wilson and Barbieri alone on stage. Ditching the "no phones" request, Barbieri incites us to sway our smartphone torches, filling the arena with stars – and throwing Wilson off spectacularly ("You've made me forget the words!") – before an inevitable but warmly welcomed *Trains* to finish.

In 2023 Porcupine Tree will play festivals. Beyond that, who knows. But 12 years after a farewell riddled with unfinished business, tonight just feels… *right*.

Polly Glass

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‘A magical combination of charisma, passion and heart.’

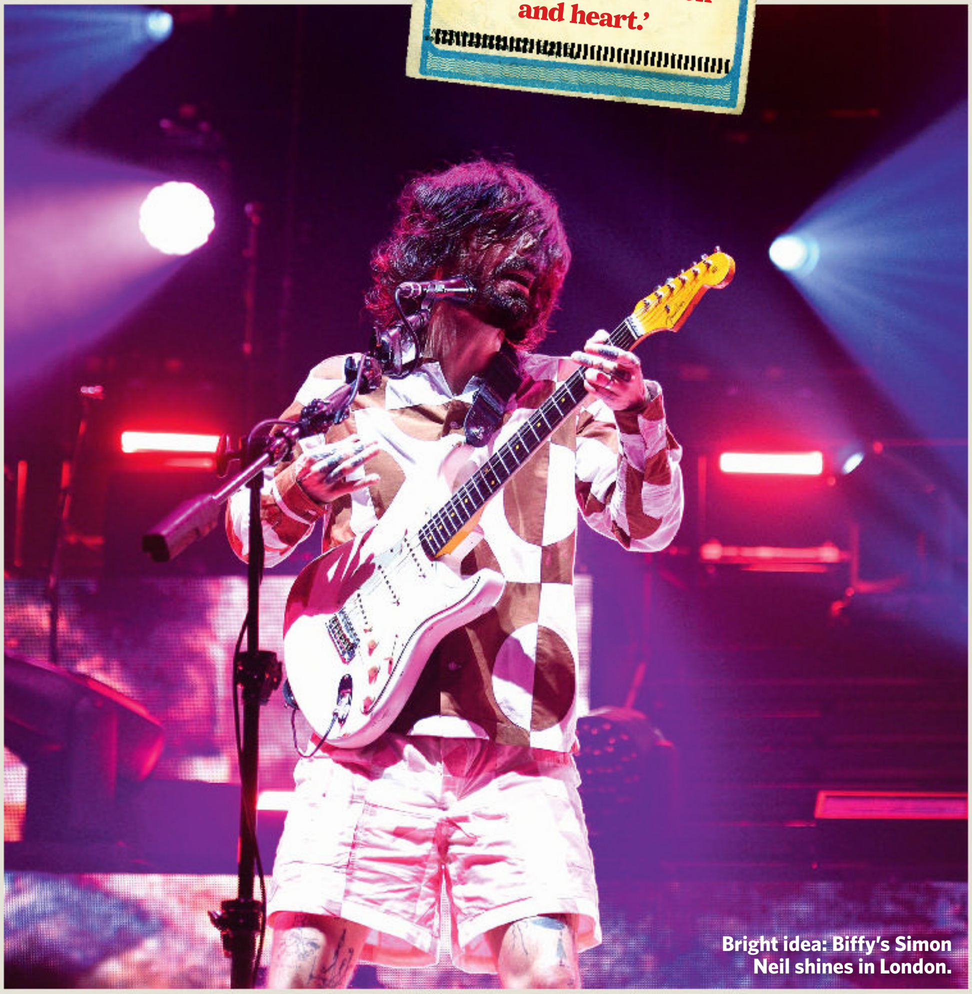
Biffy Clyro
London O2 Arena

A master class in commanding an arena from the Scottish rockers.

★ There’s always a celebratory air to a Biffy Clyro gig, the underdogs who made it all the way to the top, but tonight, in front of a sold-out crowd, they outdo themselves. From the moment they arrive, now with two violinists in tow as well as touring guitarist Mike Vennart and keyboard player Richard Ingram, they play host to a two-hour singalong without pause.

From a spectacular light show that takes in frontman Simon Neil swinging a giant bulb around his head and, during the thumping, adrenaline-fuelled disco rock of *Glitter & Trauma*, strobes held aloft like giant glowsticks, to a painstakingly crafted setlist in which each dizzying high is matched and surpassed as the lengthy show zips breathlessly by, this is slick but edgy rock’n’roll showmanship at its best. The core trio of Neil, bassist James Johnston and drummer Ben Johnston exude a magical combination of charisma, passion and heart, wringing out every last drop of emotion and excitement and making the vast room feel intimate and special. And it’s a testament to their winning oddness that they can slot in the proggy, meandering, howling *Cop Syrup* in between the swooningly romantic bookends of *Space* and *Re-Arrange* and make it seem like the most natural thing in the world. Encoring with a triumphant *Many Of Horror*, they leave the stage safe in the knowledge that they remain the UK’s finest and most exciting live band.

Emma Johnston



Bright idea: Biffy’s Simon Neil shines in London.

Bob Dylan
London Palladium

Nobel laureate weaves that old black magic.

★ The shared anticipation of something extraordinary about to happen is palpable. Complete strangers are striking up conversations. At a gig. In London. This is not normal. “Where did you last see him?” echoes between rows in the royal circle. There are no expectations that this could possibly be anybody’s first time. Bob Dylan is no ordinary turn. It’s apparent that for many here, he’s a way of life. And his near-divine presence is imminent.

Phones, locked for the duration into Yondr pouches, lie dormant in laps. Many are asking themselves ‘if I can’t put it on social media, will it have actually happened?’ It’s an almost existential conundrum. Is a life one can’t upload any kind of life at all? The dimly-lit stage’s unmanned instruments leer back at us, immodestly undraped, accusatory. And then, there he is. Looking frail but stylish he strikes up the keys for *Watching The River Flow*. A punter in row C offers me a Fruit Pastille. No ordinary gig. Across the next ninety minutes, Dylan (intimately close, if barely illuminated) offers an astonishing reading of his latest *Rough And Rowdy Ways* album (other than *Murder Most Foul*), interspersed with seven deep cuts and Johnny Mercer’s *That Old Black Magic*. It’s an effecting display, a casual masterclass in maintaining mystique. Dylan looks great, oozes antediluvian cool, and just gets better. Phone… what phone?

Ian Fortnam

Saxon / Diamond Head
Bexhill-on-Sea De La Warr Pavilion

Barnsley’s Big Teasers bash Bexhill.

★ Affirming their status as a band of the people, Saxon’s first ever concert in Bexhill takes place as part of a 14-date theatre jaunt around the UK. Back in January, three years later than billed, the band belatedly celebrated their 40th anniversary with a joyous trip down memory lane. Still riding the wave of a creative purple patch that began at the millennium’s turn and in the wake of such a nostalgia-fest, it’s only right for the quintet to shine a spotlight on this year’s twenty-third album, the excellent *Carpe Diem*. Some fans insist that the inclusion of no less than six tracks oversteps the mark somewhat, which in turn, means that the likes of *Strong Arm Of The Law* and *Solid Ball Of Rock* are reduced to medley form, though to deny the quality of *Living On The Limit* and *Black Is The Night* is foolish.

Although known primarily for filling our heads with *Heavy Metal Thunder* (one of many golden oldies included in the set tonight), Saxon also demonstrate that they have some versatility, via harder rocking numbers such as *I’ve Got To Rock To Stay Alive, Thin Red Line* and the timeless *Dallas 1 PM*. It’s a winning, head-shaking mix.

Earlier in the evening, special guests Diamond Head also mix the contemporary (*Bones, The Messenger*) and the vintage (*The Prince, Helpless, It’s Electric* and the Metallica-endorsed *Am I Evil?*) to triumphant effect.

Dave Ling

Clutch
Brighton Dome

Clutch back on the road and very much firing on all cylinders.

★ “Now it’s getting serious – there’s a tambourine involved. This is a military grade, tactical tambourine,” deadpans frontman Neil Fallon, just as the band tear into the monstrously groovy *10000 Witnesses*, three quarters of the way through the set. Very much back in their natural habitat, Clutch are cruising powerfully through a set cherry-picked from thirty years of crunching rock’n’roll, which, of course, makes for a great set list lottery. 2015’s *Psychic Warfare* does particularly well, the irresistible one-two of *X-Ray Visions* and *Firebirds!* igniting some major pit action, and the magnificent *Sucker For The Witch* and ZZ Top referencing *A Quick Death In Texas* following a little later. And the inevitable newies slot in neatly among the oldies like they’ve always been there, *Slaughter Beach* and *Nosferatu Madre* sounding particularly tight. Never big on stagecraft, bassist Dan Maines and guitarist Tim Sult cut taciturn figures in front of their back lines – Sult occasionally stepping forward to deliver a casually incendiary wah-wah solo – while drummer Jean-Paul Gaster enters his usual cosmic fugue state from the off, leaving Fallon to prowl and growl at the front. Encoring with *Passive Restraints, Impetus* and *A Shogun Named Marcus* (“Some old numbers for you young folks”), Clutch thankfully remain pretty much invincible. A welcome return, and no mistake.

Essi Berelian

GETTY

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The Soundtrack Of My Life

Jethro Tull mainman ***Ian Anderson***, on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: **Grant Moon**

T first Jethro Tull studio album for nearly 20 years, *The Zealot Gene* landed high in our Albums Of 2022 list. Mainman Ian Anderson may be 75, but his talents as a songwriter, flautist and frontman remain undimmed. With the follow-up album done and due next year, we asked this prog god for his Soundtrack selections.

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

In The Mood by Glenn Miller and his orchestra. I was about six. My father had a few treasured wartime records, mostly big-band stuff. I remember having an epiphany, because *In The Mood* introduces you to the elements of blues, effectively. That was my first moment of thinking: "Hmm, this music is something special…"

THE FIRST SONG I PERFORMED LIVE

Around 1964 [early Tull members] John Evan, Jeffrey Hammond and I dared to play a few songs at the youth club of the Holy Family Church in Blackpool. Among them was *Walking The Dog* by Rufus Thomas, as covered by the Rolling Stones. We knew the Stones were a fake, so we went back to find the originals of the music they covered, then did it our own way – in a not dissimilar fake fashion to the Rolling Stones!

THE GUITAR HERO

In the early Fleetwood Mac days Peter Green had a real soulful quality. He could make a guitar sing like a human voice. Peter had this wonderful tone, wonderful control. He could play a lot of notes when the music warranted it, otherwise he seduced you with quality rather than quantity.

BEST SONGWRITER

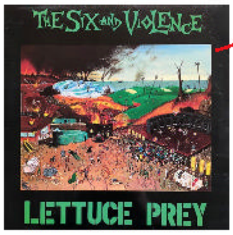
Roy Harper. From 1968 to 1970 I bought his records, and he stood apart from other songwriters of the era, because he covered a lot of range, from political and social issues through to plain and simple, stoned love songs. I'm always drawn back to *Come Out Fighting Genghis Smith* ['68]. I'd just moved to London myself, and it resonated with me. So hats off to Roy Harper, as Led Zeppelin once said.

THE SINGER

Head and shoulders above all rock singers for me is Lou Gramm. Incredible precision and diction – you can hear every word he sings, unlike the majority of singers before and since. He had decorative elements in his delivery that weren't overdone – mainly he sang on the beat, in tune and with great emotion.

THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

The Deutsche Grammophon recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, from around 1962. I became besotted with his symphonies, particularly the Ninth, and it's stayed with me all my life. Not very rock'n'roll, but in a different kind of a way, yes it *is* rock'n'roll.



THE BEST RECORD I EVER MADE

The one I've just finished recording. If people liked *The Zealot Gene*, they'll like the new one more. But if you were trying to pin me down for a record you might know, then I might go for *Songs From The Wood* [1977].

THE WORST RECORD I EVER MADE

The song *Singing All Day* is a stinker. A throwaway track that we immediately sidelined until we were desperate for some material for a compilation album we had to make under contract with Warner Brothers. It came from the bottom of the barrel. A real turkey.

THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND EVER

The Six And Violence were a bunch of guys from New York who played thrash metal. They were violent on stage but absolute pussycats off it. I played on [1990 debut] *Lettuce Prey*. They struggled on manfully for a few years but never got the breaks. I always thought they deserved better.

MY BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

When Frank Zappa was terminally ill, I received a message to say he would like me to call him. I'd never met him. I was a fan, but my instinct was he really didn't like Jethro Tull, so it was a little odd. I dialled the number three times, but each time I hung up in panic; I was embarrassed – what do you say to a dying man? A few weeks later he died. From what I heard he'd wanted to talk to a few people, just to say hi, and I was one of them. It wouldn't have changed anything, except I would have had my first and last words with one of the great original composers and performers of rock music history.

GUILTY PLEASURE

I have a soft spot for the brutal, simplistic music of Motörhead and the Ramones. And I like Marc Almond too. We have performed together regularly at Christmas, in fundraisers and cathedrals. That might surprise people – we're of a different era, personality and character, but we are good buddies.

MY 'IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE' SONG

Roy Harper's *Another Day*. A lot of people have been drawn to the romantic intimacy of the lyrics, and the languid orchestral arrangement on Roy's original recording. It's romantic first, and sexy second. It talks of intimacy in a respectful way.

THE SONG I WOULD LIKE TO BE PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

What A Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong. For several decades we've used it as the end-of-show music. It always seems to me a very fitting way of saying goodbye to a departing audience, so it would have a great resonance for me personally because of that fact. It's a song of gratitude, of thanks for a wonderful world which we live in.

"Head and shoulders above all rock singers for me is Lou Gramm."

IAN ANDERSON: WILL IRELAND; LOU GRAMM: GETTY

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SUN 29 **OXFORD** NEW THEATRE
TUE 31 **BATH** FORUM

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WED 01 **READING** HEXAGON
THU 02 **HALIFAX** VICTORIA HALL
SAT 04 **HARROGATE** CONVENTION CENTRE
SUN 05 **LIVERPOOL** EMPIRE
MON 06 **ABERDEEN** MUSIC HALL
WED 08 **DUNDEE** CAIRD HALL
THU 09 **EDINBURGH** USHER HALL
FRI 10 **HULL** BONUS ARENA
SAT 11 **SHEFFIELD** CITY HALL
MON 13 **IPSWICH** REGENT
TUE 14 **SOUTHEND** CLIFFS PAVILION
WED 15 **GUILDFORD** G LIVE
FRI 17 **PORTSMOUTH** GUILDHALL
SAT 18 **PLYMOUTH** PAVILIONS
SUN 19 **MILTON KEYNES** THEATRE
TUE 21 **STOKE** REGENT THEATRE
THU 23 **LLANDUDNO** VENUE CYMRU
FRI 24 **MANCHESTER** O2 APOLLO
SAT 25 **GLASGOW** OVO HYDRO
MON 27 **BIRMINGHAM** SYMPHONY HALL
THU 30 **NOTTINGHAM** ROYAL CONCERT HALL

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TUE 05 **LEICESTER** DE MONTFORT HALL
THU 07 **LONDON** EVENTIM APOLLO
FRI 08 **BRIGHTON** CENTRE
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